

Golan withdrawal on agenda — Rabin

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Saturday Israel and Syria would discuss a phased withdrawal from the Golan Heights and security arrangements at bilateral talks due to resume in Washington next month. Speaking on Israeli army radio, Mr. Rabin said: "We will discuss the phases of withdrawal (from the Golan) without setting the final limits, along with security arrangements and the way in which the United States can contribute to the negotiations." Mr. Rabin added: "I think we will negotiate within a slightly different framework and not be content with general statements." Mr. Rabin urged Syrian President Hafez Al Assad to "convince Israeli public opinion that he wants peace, by agreeing to public meetings at the highest level between the two countries' leaders." Mr. Rabin told Israeli officers Thursday there would go ahead with a referendum on the Golan Heights to "show the Syrians they must do something to prove to the Israelis the seriousness of their intentions."

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Iraq has 'deals with French oil firms'

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's Oil Ministry and French oil companies have struck deals that will be activated once U.N. sanctions against Baghdad have been eased or lifted, the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported on Saturday. Quoting an interview with Iraq's Oil Minister Safa Hadi Jawad in Saturday's Al Qadisiya newspaper, INA said the negotiations which clinched the deals took place recently in Paris. It gave no further details. Mr. Jawad also said that major U.S., British, Brazilian, Canadian and Spanish oil companies had expressed "their deep willingness" to conclude agreements and cooperate with Iraq's oil industry once U.N. sanctions were lifted. INA reported. He said these approaches had been made at meetings in Baghdad and elsewhere, including Amman and Vienna, but did not elaborate on the talks. INA reported. Iraq is forbidden to sell its oil on international markets under U.N. sanctions imposed on the country after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Mr. Jawad said that Iraq's oil output was now 550,000 to 600,000 barrels per day, adding that Iraq was developing previously known but untapped oilfields in central and western areas of the country, INA stated.

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Jordan made its points clear to Ross, Majali tells Cabinet

Anani reports on premier's briefing on Aqaba siege, peace talks and review of Amnesty assessment

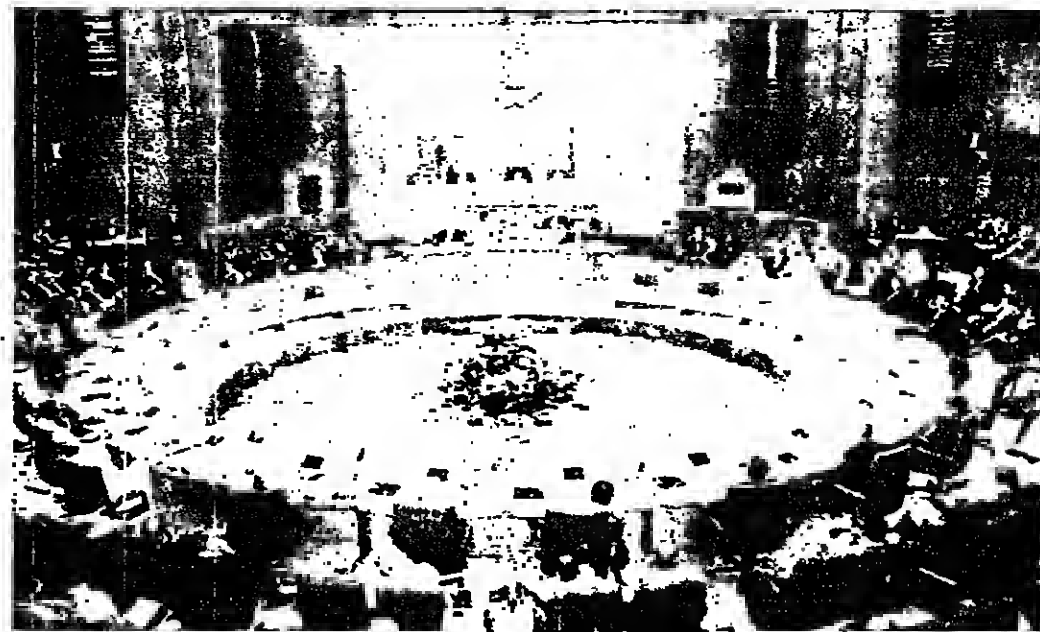
AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan strongly protested to the United States against the continued inspection of Aqaba-bound shipping in the Red Sea during a recent visit to Amman by U.S. Middle East peace coordinator Dennis Ross, Information Minister Jawad Anani said Saturday. "Jordan told the U.S. administration that the inspection of ships and the subsequent delay of the arrival of Jordan-bound goods were severely harming the Jordanian economy," Dr. Anani said in a statement following a regular Cabinet session. Dr. Anani said Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali briefed the ministers on his meeting with Mr. Ross in Amman on Wednesday.

In the course of discussing Jordanian-U.S. relations the prime minister focused on the question of the Red Sea inspections by the U.S.-led enforcers of the sanctions on Iraq and noted that an increasing number of ships was turned back for unjustified reasons, Dr. Anani said. The minister said since the inspections started in August 1991, a total of 1,700 ships were intercepted but the inspectors could not find a single violation of the sanctions. The inspection "is totally unacceptable to Jordan," Dr. Anani quoted Dr. Majali as telling Mr. Ross. "If the inspections have to continue then they should take place at Aqaba port and conducted by a neutral non-military party," the prime minister said, according to Dr. Anani. Dr. Anani noted that Jordan had submitted a proposal for land-based inspections to the United States. He said the U.S. administration had promised to consider this matter

seriously at the time and Jordan was hoping that a solution would be found very soon. Dr. Anani said the question of the Middle East peace negotiations was discussed with Mr. Ross. Jordan demanded that concrete progress be achieved in the peace talks, he said. Jordan pointed out that the talks had so far achieved nothing because Israel refuses to enter into substantial issues and refuses to implement the agreements achieved thus far, he said. "Jordan warned that unless substantial progress is achieved soon the whole peace process would come under suspicion," Dr. Anani said. On prospects for the resumption of Arab-Israeli bilateral talks in Washington next month, Dr. Anani said Jordan had already announced that the Kingdom would give its approval through a collec-

tive decision by the Arab countries involved in the peace process and the subject could also come up in the Arab foreign ministers meeting which started in Cairo Saturday. Dr. Anani said U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher could be visiting the region soon to discuss the resumption of the talks in Washington and arrangements that would ensure positive developments in the negotiations. Mr. Ross, in his discussions with Dr. Majali, expressed optimism that Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) would soon reach an agreement over security arrangements in Hebron and measures for the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho first agreement, said Dr. Anani. He said Israel had given its

(Continued on page 5)



A general view of an Arab League council meeting in Cairo on Saturday (AFP photo)

Arab League opens meeting, freezes changes to charter

CAIRO (Agencies) — Arab League foreign ministers met Saturday to smooth over regional disputes but could not even agree to vote on a proposal to make the league's decisions binding on its members. Ministers from 18 countries and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and lower-ranking representatives of the league's other three members gathered to discuss an agenda that included the possible partial lifting of the economic boycott of Israel, Libya's problems with the West, amendment of the Arab League Charter and the establishment of an Arab court of justice. Opening speakers lamented rifts among the Arabs, saying they crippled the organisation

face of the challenges of the post-cold war world. But in their first working session, held immediately after the opening, the ministers failed to vote either on changing the charter to make decisions easier to come by and binding on members or on establishing an Arab court. Emerging from the session, Foreign Minister Amr Musa of Egypt told journalists votes on both issues were postponed to the next ministerial meeting "because the time wasn't right" to discuss them. Both initiatives were revived in 1990, after Iraq invaded Kuwait. Ministers hoped that changing the charter to make Arab League decisions binding and to establish an Arab court would make the organisation

more effective in resolving regional problems. But splits among the Arabs that erupted during that crisis have not allowed passage of either proposition. In sessions Saturday night, league ministers were to discuss a request by the United States for the Arabs to stop boycotting companies that do business with Israel. Arab diplomats said they expected the boycott, imposed in 1952, to continue unchanged particularly in view of the Feb. 25 Hebron mosque massacre of dozens of Palestinian worshippers. On arrival in Cairo Friday night, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said he was

(Continued on page 5)

Jordan firm on assigning responsibility for U.N. vote

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan insisted Saturday that the inclusion of Jerusalem in a March 18 Security Council resolution was counterproductive despite Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) criticism of the Jordanian position as "confusing" and "puzzling."

Responding to a statement by the PLO's observer mission at the United Nations, Minister of Information Jawad Anani told the Jordan Times that while the Kingdom agrees with the PLO that there is no conceivable peace without Jerusalem, there is a "difference in opinion over entering it (Jerusalem)" within the resolution. The PLO's U.N. observer mission on Friday criticised "confusing comments on the issue of Jerusalem" by a number of Jordanian officials in connection with the recent Security Council resolution.

In a statement carried from the U.N. headquarters in New York, the PLO said it had so far avoided responding to "puzzling statements." But it said it was doing so now because Jordan's U.N. envoy, Adnan Abu Odeh, had been quoted in the London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat as suggesting the issue of Jerusalem might have been better served if a reference to it had been removed from the resolution condemning the massacre of dozens of Palestinian worshippers by an Israeli settler in

(Continued on page 5)

Accord reached on checking cargo of one ship at Aqaba

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — For the first time since the imposition of international sanctions against Iraq, a cargo ship carrying freight for Jordan coming through the Red Sea will be inspected on shore instead of high seas in what could turn out to be a precedent-setting event, informed sources said Saturday. The sources said the Skyman, a 13,000-tonne German vessel carrying 3,000 tonnes of general cargo for Jordan, was expected to dock at Aqaba on Monday and a "civilian officer" from the diplomatic mission of the anti-Iraq coalition would inspect the cargo at the port. The Skyman was prevented from proceeding towards Aqaba on March 18 by the U.S.-led enforcers of the international sanctions against Iraq. After four inspections, the inspectors ruled on Wednesday that the ship could not be allowed to proceed to Aqaba since they did not have "accessibility" to inspect some of the cargo.

The vessel proceeded to a Gulf port to unload cargo destined there before returning to the Red Sea for a new inspection with better cargo accessibility, the sources said. "It was half way to a Gulf port from the Red Sea when an agreement was reached after Jordanian government intervention that the vessel could be inspected at Aqaba port rather than the Tiran Straits," where the inspections usually take place, said one source. "Subsequently, it was recalled to Aqaba. The vessel is expected at Aqaba on Monday." The Skyman is carrying general cargo, including steel rods and animal feed, for the Jordanian market, according to the ship's agents. The inspection of the Skyman will be the first on-land inspection of cargo coming through Aqaba after the imposition of the sanctions against Iraq in August 1990. It was not immediately clear whether the agreement for land-based inspection of the Skyman was a one-time procedure or the forerunner of a mechanism proposed by Jordan.

(Continued on page 5)

Family of 9 killed, hundreds stranded in floods in Ramtha

By Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Nine people were killed, hundreds were stranded and farmlands were extensively damaged in floods that hit the Ramtha area on the border with Syria, civil defence officials said Saturday. The Civil Defence Department (CDD) identified the dead as school teacher Awad Saleh Mayas, 36, his wife Badriyah and their seven children — five boys and two girls between two months and 11 years. They drowned as their car was over swept by a torrent at Bweidah district on the eastern parts of Ramtha Friday evening, the CDD said.

The family was returning home from a trip outside the town when streams of one to two metres hit their car and no one could save them, said a CDD official in Amman. The official told the Jordan Times that the streams hit the eastern parts of Ramtha, isolating many people in their homes in remote regions. The CDD rescued 300 people, the official said. The Department of Meteorology said that the sudden burst of rainfall covered most of the northern areas of Jordan Friday afternoon and evening. A department spokesman said that at least two hours of rain fell in the Bweidah district, causing floods in some areas.

The CDD official said many homes along the streams were cracked or flooded. The CDD was helped by army helicopters, which helped in rescue efforts, he said. The CDD official said that the incident was perhaps the first of its kind in the town's history. The Department of Meteorology said unstable weather conditions continued Saturday but were expected to end Sunday. Temperatures would rise to 21 degrees centigrade, and the eastern regions of the country could still receive showers Sunday, he said.

Experts debate 'responsibility' for dismal state of Arab affairs

By Suhair Obaidat
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A charge that radical Arab regimes were responsible for the dismal state of affairs of the Arab World sparked a heated debate among political scientists and historians with expertise in strategic studies at a regional conference which opened here Saturday. One of the key speakers, Wahed Abdul Majied, said Arab states, to date, still suffer the repercussions of their failed options, mainly totalitarian and undemocratic regimes and dependence on the defunct Soviet Union. Speaking at a session titled "Arabs in the American

Strategy" Dr. Abdul Majied, of Al Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, said revolutionary totalitarian Arab regimes made the United States choose Israel as its first ally in the region. He argued that in addition to the fundamental role that Israel played in achieving U.S. strategic aims in the region (confronting communism and the expansion of the former Soviet Union), the U.S. and Israel "share the same democratic and human rights principles." He added that following the end of the cold war and in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Israel and the Jewish lobby in the United States today search for new

enemies in the region to retain Israel's role within the context of U.S. interests, mainly Islamic fundamentalism, considered the major threat to the West and its interests. Dr. Abdul Majied said the aforementioned elements make it difficult for the U.S. to revise its relationship with Israel, even after major developments in the Middle East region such as the peace process, which is undermining its credibility. "As Arabs, we could not attempt to influence the American policy in this field because we could not go ahead with democracy, and we could not

(Continued on page 5)

Bouez: Peace talks are sterile

CAIRO (R) — Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Bouez said on Saturday Arab talks with Israel were sterile and would make no headway before a self-rule deal between the Jewish state and the Palestinians went into effect. "Until now, the negotiations have been sterile and going nowhere," Mr. Bouez, in Cairo to attend a regular Arab League meeting, told Reuters in an interview. One of the main reasons for lack of progress, he said, was that Israel was not ready to make any headway on any of the other Arab tracks in the peace process until it sealed its peace accord with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), signed in Washington last year. Mr. Bouez said the Jewish state had expressed reservations over negotiating on different fronts. "This is why the latest three months witnessed a stagnation in the talks," he added. A second reason was that

Israel was intentionally slowing any progress, especially after the meeting in January between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad. "The Israelis wanted to show that the meeting of Geneva between Assad and Clinton was a failure. They wanted to foil the Geneva agreement because they are against any direct talks between any Arab leader and the United States," he said. "They intentionally wanted... to show that dialogue can only be with Israel," he said. Mr. Bouez said Israeli internal political problems were blocking Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government from taking decisions essential to the negotiations on the Golan Heights and South Lebanon. "For all these reasons, the latest round of negotiations was virtually sterile," he added. Speaking of the Arab

League meeting, he said the ministers of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon might consult to decide on a tentative date for their countries to meet to coordinate their policies ahead of any peace talks. Mr. Bouez said that U.S. envoy Robert Pelletreau, who went to Beirut on Friday, told him that Israel and the PLO could sign their deal on a limited Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho by April. He said U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher might tour the Middle East before the next round of peace talks. "The Americans believe that in mid-April the Palestinians and Israelis can sign an agreement and that Christopher may come to the region (then) to consolidate this agreement and to make a ton that would prepare for the resumption of the next round of negotiations," Mr. Bouez said.

(Continued on page 5)

Pyongyang says Japan not safe

TOKYO (R) — North Korea said on Saturday Japan would never be safe if war broke out on the Korean peninsula.

Tension is running high in the region over North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons programme and diplomatic efforts are underway to try to defuse the crisis. "If the situation on the Korean Peninsula goes worse and a war breaks out, Japan will never be safe, either," the North Korean workers' party daily Rodong Sinmun said. The statement was carried by the official Korean Central News Agency monitored in Tokyo. The daily accused Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa and Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata of taking hardline stance against Pyongyang, which is suspected of developing nuclear weapons. "The reckless military action of the Japanese reactionaries against the Korean people will result in digging their own grave," the daily said. In August, North Korea acknowledged the development of the long-range Rodong-1 missile, following reports in Japan, South Korea and the United States that it had test-fired four of them in the Sea of Japan. Japanese officials said they could not say whether the test-firings were successful. The Rodong-1 — an up-graded version of Scud missiles used in the Gulf war — has a range of about 1,000 kilometres and could hit targets in less than 10 minutes after firing, the Japanese defence officials said. The military journal Jane's Sentinel said earlier this month that North Korea was developing two new ballistic missiles, one with a range of up to 3,500 kilometres, sufficient to attack Guam Island in the Pacific. Quoting U.S. intelligence sources, the military journal said the missiles, given the code names Taepo Dong-1 (TD-1) and TD-2, are two-stage missiles with a range of 2,000 kilometres and 3,500 kilometres respectively. Gnam has a major U.S.

(Continued on page 5)

Israel-PLO contacts continue, police could deploy in 2 weeks

TUNIS (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israeli officials, discussing details by telephone, hope to reach agreement by Tuesday on security for Palestinians in Hebron, PLO officials said on Saturday. An agreement on Hebron would be expected to clear the way for resumption of their far-behind-schedule negotiations on interim Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and a West Bank enclave around Jericho. Israeli Radio said Palestinian police will be deployed in the occupied territories within two weeks as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin spoke of progress in meeting the PLO's security demands following last month's Hebron massacre.

Israel and the PLO agreed on the deployment in nine days' time of several dozen Palestinian policemen in the Gaza Strip and West Bank towns of Jericho and Hebron, the radio said. Their initial task would be to familiarise themselves with the terrain, and in Hebron, to guard public buildings and the university. Uri Savir, Israeli foreign ministry director general, told the radio the Palestinian police in Hebron could carry pistols. However, unlike those to be deployed in Gaza and Jericho, "they will remain under Israeli authority."

Mr. Savir said the PLO "agreed that in the event of conflict... Israel will have the last word." Dozens of lightly-armed Norwegian observers will also be deployed in Hebron, where a Jewish settler shot dead dozens of Palestinian worshippers in a mosque on Feb. 25. The two sides are to decide on the exact numbers of police and observers when they resume talks in Cairo on Tuesday, according to the radio. Mr. Rabin told Israeli army radio an accord was in sight on security for Hebron Palestinians, as demanded by the PLO as a condition for resuming the negotiations on launching autonomy in Gaza and

Jericho. "I believe we have advanced in the right direction these last days in Cairo and that the negotiations will resume Tuesday in Egypt," he said, after having been briefed on talks with the PLO that ended Thursday. "I hope we will manage to overcome the first difficulty, that is to find the arrangements in Hebron to boost the security of the Palestinian population" so as to allow the autonomy talks to resume, he said. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said implementation of the PLO-Israeli autonomy accord signed last September could start "in one or two months." Mr. Peres said: "We agreed (with the PLO) to resume autonomy negotiations at an accelerated pace in Cairo Tuesday." In Washington, a State Department official said Friday that the U.S. administration expected the deployment of

force, Israeli troops disarmed and detained several Jewish settlers after a confrontation over prayer rights at the Ibrahim Mosque. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, meanwhile, said he would not move settlers out of Hebron "at this stage," but did not rule out an evacuation at a later time. A group of settlers tried to enter mosque, which they call the Tomb of the Patriarchs, holy to Jews and Muslims, after hours set aside for Jews under security orders issued after the massacre, an army spokesman said. After skirmishes, the soldiers confiscated weapons from some settlers to avoid "a new confrontation with soldiers and Muslim worshippers who were trying to pray" in the mosque, the spokesman said. Soldiers also checked the identities of some of the settlers, but made no arrests. In several neighbourhoods in tense Hebron, soldiers clashed with month-long curfew imposed to contain post-massacre protests. Shortly after Jahaliya's clashes, in an unusual show of

(Continued on page 5)

Dozens injured in Israeli gunfire

HEBRON, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Israeli troops and Jewish settlers fired on hundreds of stone-throwing Palestinians in the occupied West Bank on Saturday, wounding at least 30 of them, witnesses and hospital sources said. The clashes in Hebron, Nablus and Tulkarem followed the partial lifting by the Israeli army of a curfew imposed on Hebron after the Feb. 25 mosque massacre there by a Jewish settler, witnesses said. The soldiers and settlers, witnesses in Hebron added, opened fire in separate incidents. The army said it was checking the reports. The incidents, during which the army used tear-gas to disperse protesters, followed a week in which Israeli troops killed four Palestinians and wounded dozens in Hebron. Three of the dead were leading members of the Hamas Islamic Resistance Movement, killed during an apartment block siege. Shortly after Jahaliya's clashes, in an unusual show of

Scores of youths pelted troops from behind barricades made from scrap metal and burning tyres. Soldiers also fired tear-gas to disperse several hundred Palestinians gathered at the ruins of an apartment house levelled in an army raid in which the three men were killed this week. Despite the lifting of the curfew, most of Hebron remained shuttered in mourning for the slain Hamas men. Masked Hamas activists, carrying Palestinian flags, marched to a wake, chanting: "Who, martyrs, your blood shall not be wasted." In clashes elsewhere in the occupied territories, some 30 Palestinians were hurt Saturday, including eight wounded by live ammunition in the Gaza Strip refugee camp of Jabalya. The PLO has demanded that Israel move the more than 400 settlers out of Hebron to reduce friction. Mr. Rabin said Saturday they would stay put for now, but hinted he might act against the six Jewish enclaves in Hebron at later time.

Pentagon says Somalia mission accomplished, but criticism lingers

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Pentagon is withdrawing the last U.S. troops from Somalia with a sense of pride in a mission accomplished, but nagging criticism persists that the U.S. displayed a political lack of will during the operation.

"Before we arrived in December '92, hundreds of thousands of people had died as the result of starvation," said Major Joe Gradisher, the Pentagon spokesman in charge of African affairs.

"Since then it has stopped. We saved thousands of lives and put Somalia on the road to recovery," he said.

But military analysts say the operation ran into trouble when it turned into a holding action by peacekeepers under U.N. command.

The first phase, Operation Restore Hope, was a success they contend because it met clearly defined military objectives: U.S. troops landed in Mogadishu and secured the airports and opened the roads for relief convoys.

"We never used military force beyond the first phase of the operation," noted Don Snider, who served on the staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the national security in the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

Mr. Snider, now politico-military studies director at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, said the lessons to be learned from the Somalia experience were political rather than strictly military.

"When you start to use mili-

ary force to pursue a poorly defined objective, you have a recipe for disaster," he said.

The search for General Mohammed Farah Aideded clearly illustrates the problem. The Americans let it be known that they knew where he was at virtually every moment.

The idea of capturing Gen. Aideded was achievable militarily, but was abandoned in favour of a policy that looked exclusively to restoring the peace, according to one military source.

"It simply was a mistake politically to go after Aideded. We did not use at all the military capabilities we had to execute that kind of search," said Mr. Snider.

As for the ambush Oct. 3 in which 18 U.S. commandos and, by some estimates, several hundred Somalis were killed during a raid on an Aideded stronghold in Mogadishu, Mr. Snider said it amounted to another political disaster.

The high number of U.S. casualties prompted President Bill Clinton to order the gradual withdrawal of the troops.

Nevertheless some experts point out that the U.S. troops were outnumbered eight or nine to one in the ambush and argue that from a purely military point of view the U.S. action was a success.

As Washington prepared to honour the leaders of the operation, the Pentagon had drawn up its toll: Of a force of 24,000 Americans, "only" 30 were killed in combat, and another 18 were killed and one missing in the crash of an AC-130 over Kenya March 14.



TOUGH DEFIANCE: A Palestinian youth who tried to escape jeep by Israeli soldiers who roughed him up inside the vehicle before taking him away (AFP photo)

British paper uncovers arms scandal evidence

LONDON (Agencies) — Three men were jailed for illegal arms trading with Iran despite British government knowledge of their activities in a case that closely parallels the "arms-to-Iraq" scandal, a London newspaper reported on Saturday.

The Independent said it had discovered that Britain's international spy agency, MI6, encouraged one of the defendants to continue his involvement in the project, and that government knowledge of the arms trading with Iran was suppressed during the trial.

The "arms-to-Iraq" scandal centres on claims the government broke its own rules banning arms sales to Iraq and tried to stop the policy coming to light in a court case involving executives from the Matrix Churchill engineering firm.

The probe, set up by Prime Minister John Major when the trial collapsed in November 1992 and headed by Lord Justice Scott, has posed a serious threat to Mr. Major's fragile government.

In the fresh allegations, the Independent said four men stood trial in 1988 for attempting to defraud Iran by offering missiles for sale which they could not supply.

"Three of the defendants repeatedly protested their innocence and insisted that both the British and American authorities knew of the project," it said, adding the men were given jail sentences of between two and six years.

The fourth defendant, a businessman named John Taylor from Surrey, southern England, was acquitted, and has now provided fresh evidence of a lengthy relationship with MI6.

But his involvement with the spying agency was not disclosed to the jury during the trial, although it was discussed in the judge's chamber by the prosecution and the defence.

Before the trial, a lawyer working for the security services visited Mr. Taylor's lawyer, confirming the businessman had worked for MI6 for more than a decade, the Independent said.

Taylor said his involvement in the deal to sell Iran 5,000 missiles began late in 1985, when he joined the three other men who were negotiating to sell the arms through intermediaries, the paper said.

The intermediaries later claimed they were the victims of an elaborate fraud.

Ciller faces test in elections

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, battling an economic crisis and Kurdish rebels, meets her first electoral test when Turks vote in municipal polls Sunday.

Opinion polls suggest Ms. Ciller's True Path Party (DYP) and her junior coalition partner, the Social Democrat Populist Party (SHP), may muster barely a third of the vote between them.

Such a poor showing could wreck the coalition's credibility, already eroded by this year's economic trauma, and reinforce opposition party calls for early parliamentary elections.

The Konda poll said SHP mayoral candidates would win in Ankara and Izmir, with their Motherland rivals in second place.

Turkey's economy, flirting with recession and hyperinflation, has given the coalition its biggest headache ahead of the polls.

Fearing the wrath of voters, Ms. Ciller has delayed drastic action to tackle public deficits, curb inflation widely expected to hit triple figures this year and restore confidence in the lira.

The U.S. agency Standard Poor's cut Turkey's credit rating this week, saying it feared the elections might not dissolve the political gridlock which has blocked resolute economic measures.

Ms. Ciller has sought to divert attention from the economy by pitting herself against Kurdish nationalists and Muslim radicals.

She organised a "respect for Atatürk" day earlier this month to underline Turkey's commitment to the secular legacy of the republic's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk — and discredited the RP, one of whose MPs had cast aspersions on Atatürk's mother.

More controversially, she encouraged parliament to strip the RP deputy and seven Kurdish nationalist MPs of their immunity to enable them to be prosecuted by a state security court.

Six of the Kurdish MPs have been jailed awaiting trial on charges of backing the separatist cause of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas and could face the death penalty.

"Every vote for the DYP is a bullet shot at the PKK," Ms. Ciller, Turkey's first woman prime minister, tells election rallies.

In Istanbul, the most glitter-

Amid stumbling peace talks, Camp David is 15

CAIRO (AP) — As Middle East peace talks stumble along, the first Arab Israeli treaty marks its 15th anniversary Saturday with Egypt and Israel still learning to live together.

Their armies no longer threaten each other, and the border is open 24 hours a day. Israelis visit on holiday. Egyptian oil flows to Israeli refineries, scientists travel back and forth to academic conferences.

But there remains a coolness that Egyptians say will not go away until Israel makes peace with the rest of the Arab World. That helps explain why Egypt works so hard at its role as go-between in the current talks with other Arabs.

"We endorse the Camp David treaty, and we abide by it," said Egyptian political analyst Mohammed Al Sayed. "But we are gravely concerned about the fate of the Palestinians and what happens throughout the Arab community that we are part of."

It was Egyptian President Anwar Sadat who launched the peace initiative in 1977 with a dramatic visit to Tel Aviv, the first official visit to the Jewish state by an Arab leader.

An accord was hammered out the next year at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland with much mothering from President Jimmy Carter. The treaty was signed March 26, 1979, on the White House lawn by Sadat and Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

Thus Egypt became the first Arab state to accept the existence of the Jewish state since its founding in 1948. Israel, in turn, gave back the vast Sinai desert it seized in 1967 in the third of four wars between the two countries.

Both sides were rewarded by the West, and still rank as top recipients of U.S. foreign aid with \$3 billion a year to Israel and \$2.1 billion to Egypt.

But Egypt paid dearly in other ways.

The largest country in the Arab World, with nearly 60 million people, was shunned for a decade by Arab hardliners for breaking ranks. Sadat paid with his life in 1981, the victim of extremists.

Extremism remains a threat. The Interior Ministry said earlier this month that Israel's ambassador, David Sultan, was among those on the death list of radicals.

Mr. Sultan, an Egyptian born Jew whose family emigrated to Israel in 1949, acknowledges that there was a split-personality element to the countries' relations.

"A strategic peace was established 15 years ago, and it was proved to be strong and viable," he said. "Even in the most difficult times, we maintained diplomatic relations."

On the other hand, he added: "A treaty is a piece of paper that you have to translate into a living reality. That naturally takes a lot of time."

Indeed, Egypt still issues statements critical of Israel even as it carries messages back and forth in Israel's peace talks with Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinians.

Ekeus close to notifying U.N. of Iraqi compliance

UNITED NATIONS (USIA) — The U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) overseeing the destruction of Iraq's chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic weapons is close to notifying the Security Council that all of Iraq's weapons banned under the Gulf war ceasefire agreement have been identified and destroyed, the head of the commission says.

Commission Chairman Rolf Ekeus told journalists after a private meeting with the council Wednesday that Iraq had provided "good information about the missing elements in the chemical weapons programme."

He indicated that after UNSCOM verifies the information, the U.N. data on all Iraq's weapons programmes will be complete.

In the past week, Mr. Ekeus met with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz on the political aspects of the commission's work while commission members met with an Iraqi technical team to discuss details of the long-term verification plans and review what information UNSCOM still needed.

Mr. Aziz was unsuccessful in getting UNSCOM to certify to the Security Council that Iraq — by accepting Resolution 715 outlining the long-term monitoring — had fulfilled all its weapons obligations in the ceasefire agreement. Iraq wants the certification so the council's mandatory oil embargo will be lifted.

UNSCOM has maintained that the long-term monitoring must be operational for about six months before any certification can be given to the council. The six-month criteria, Mr. Ekeus said, gives UNSCOM an opportunity to ascertain

that Iraq is complying with the long-term monitoring.

The six-month period begins after the first "baseline inspection" in each category at both military installations and industries that could have dual use military and industrial capabilities. Mr. Ekeus explained, Iraq has said it was willing to work with the U.N. inspectors "tagging missiles, inspecting chemical facilities, putting in sensors" to get the monitoring operational.

"When we have been able to carry out the first six months inspection we will have a relatively good picture of Iraq's compliance," Mr. Ekeus said, but then it will be a "political judgment" for the council to decide whether to lift the oil embargo.

The United States has said that it will look at Iraq's compliance with all the U.N. Gulf war resolutions as an indicator of intent and will take that into account in the decision to lift the oil sanctions.

"It has long been our position that in examining whether to lift sanctions it will require a leap of faith by the council... as to whether Iraq will continue to comply after it begins selling oil," U.S. mission spokesman James Rubin said recently.

In making that judgment call, we need to take into account Iraqi compliance with Security Council resolutions because they are the best indications we have of intent."

Other council members — especially Russia, France and China — are more willing to lift the embargo once Mr. Ekeus says the monitoring is running smoothly. But most council members agree that Baghdad must recognise Kuwait before they can proceed on the sanctions.

Gamaa accuses police of summary executions

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's largest underground Islamic extremist organisation accused police Friday of continuing a policy of summarily executing suspected radicals.

In a statement faxed to a Western news agency, Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah (Islamic Group) said the latest police killings were "tit-for-tat reprisals for an Al Gamaa bombing and an attack on a policeman's club."

It said three of the victims were civilians dragged from their houses and shot, their bodies dumped with extremists to make it appear as if they had been shooting police.

Nobody was injured in the bombing, near a Cairo police station, but authorities said four policemen were killed in the attack on the policemen's club in southern Egypt. The extremists' message alleged that two officers and six enlisted policemen died.

Both attacks were to avenge the March 17 executions of two Al Gamaa members for trying to kill President Hosni Mubarak last November. Police said only four policemen were killed.

A day after that attack, police killed two members of Al Gamaa, according to the extremists' statement, as they worked in their field. Another three died in what the statement described as "a fierce battle in which an unidentified number of policemen were killed or injured."

Al Gamaa claimed three innocent citizens arrested from their houses were later brought to the battle scene, shot to death and presented as terrorists killed in the exchange of fire.

More than 330 people have been killed in a two-year battle between government and Muslim extremists seeking to overthrow the largely secular regime and establish a strict Islamic state. Extremists target top government officials, police officers, foreign tourists, Christian Copts and secular

intellectuals.

Local and international human rights advocates contend the Egyptian government's record is bad due to arbitrary detention, torture and taking families of fugitives as hostages.

The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights raised doubts in a recent report over the deaths of 10 extremists whom police also claimed were killed in an exchange of fire. The report quoted witnesses as saying some of the defendants were first shot at and then laid in the street to give the impression they were resisting arrest.

Al Gamaa's Friday statement vowed to continue its attacks, which it said were effective in that they forced the government to adopt its iron-fist policy. Extremists target foreign tourists and banks to deprive the government from necessary sources of income. They also believe banks are against the rules of Islam, which prohibit fixed interest rates as usury.

Friday night's three-page Al Gamaa statement denied responsibility for an attack on a historical Christian monastery in southern Egypt in which five Christians, including two priests, were killed in early March.

Government-owned media immediately held Al Gamaa responsible for the incident. It was used to prove that extremists want only to destabilise Egypt and create sectarian conflict.

The statement accused Christians instead of extremist Muslims of carrying out attacks reflecting their views that certain Christians want to overthrow the government to suppress extremists.

"Al Gamaa, which is falsely accused by extremist seculars and communists that it is behind such cowardly attacks, calls upon the regime to investigate the case and immediately reveal those responsible for it," the statement said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel. 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Feature Film
19:00	News in French
19:15	Female Star
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	You Bet Your Life
22:15	Recording of the African Nations' Cup match
22:30	News in English
22:30	Golden Palace
PRAYER TIMES	
04:09	Fajr
05:27	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:41	Dhuhr
15:11	'Asr
17:54	Maghrib
19:12	'Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedieh, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrence Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 771331	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 694195	
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Temperatures will rise gradually with winds becoming northwesterly light to moderate. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman 7 / 21	
Aqaba 14 / 28	

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR	
DEPARTURES	
05:25	Amman (SU)
19:40	Larnaca (CY)
19:45	Beirut (ME)
20:45	Cairo (MS)
22:28	Istanbul (TA)
MARKET PRICES	
Upper/lower price in lbs per kg	
Apple	550 / 650
Banana	600
Banana (Mukdama)	620
Cabbage	250 / 300
Carrot	220 / 250
Cauliflower	220 / 250
Cucumber	80 / 40
Cucumber (large)	260 / 200
Cucumbers (small)	130 / 70
Eggplant	210 / 200
Grape	300 / 160
Grapefruit	1000 / 800
Green beans	240 / 140
Lemon	450 / 350
Marrow (large)	120 / 60
Marrow (small)	240 / 180
Onion (green)	700 / 300
Orange	480 / 180
Onion (dry)	540 / 460
Pear	280 / 180
Pepper (hot)	560 / 400
Pepper (sweet)	560 / 400
Potato	340 / 240
Radish	120 / 80
Spinach	400 / 200
String beans	140 / 80
Tomato	750 / 400

HJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN	
Dep. Amman	8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus	5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus	7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman	5:00 p.m. every Sunday
MARKET PRICES	
Upper/lower price in lbs per kg	
Apple	550 / 650
Banana	600
Banana (Mukdama)	620
Cabbage	250 / 300
Carrot	220 / 250
Cauliflower	220 / 250
Cucumber	80 / 40
Cucumber (large)	260 / 200
Cucumbers (small)	130 / 70
Eggplant	210 / 200
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Grapefruit	1000 / 800
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Pear	280 / 180
Pepper (hot)	560 / 400
Pepper (sweet)	560 / 400
Potato	340 / 240
Radish	120 / 80
Spinach	400 / 200
String beans	140 / 80
Tomato	750 / 400

U.S. senators' wives delegation ends visit with high praise of QAF development projects

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation of wives of U.S. senators completed a one-week visit to Jordan Saturday with high praise for the work of the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), according to a QAF statement.

"The Queen Alia Fund is an inspiration to peoples of countries all over the world. It demonstrates the value of volunteer organizations, helping people help themselves," said Mary Johnston, wife of Senator Bennett Johnston, chairman of the senate armed services committee.

Invited by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma to learn about Jordanian society, its social and economic development and particularly Jordanian women's role in such, the delegation was introduced first-hand to the work of QAF.

The group visited an exhibition of products of individuals participating in QAF's income-generating and productive projects including those based on traditional skills and using resources available in the beneficiaries' environment.

The delegation also visited two of the more than 40 community development centres established by QAF in ood urban and rural areas across Jordan. At the Princess Basma Centre for Social Services in Eidoun, the American woman attended a Rural Market, a pioneering scheme that gives local women the opportunity to sell their agricultural and



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma and her guests, a delegation of wives of U.S.

Senators, Friday tour facilities of the Disi Social Community Development Centre opened that day (Petra photo)

food products. The delegates also had an open discussion at the centre with representatives of the local women's sector.

"The Queen Alia Fund stimulated the self-reliance, independence and economic security of Jordanian women, which is the first step towards political maturity," said Nancy Murkowski, wife of Senator Frank Murkowski of the senate energy committee.

The delegation also attended the opening of the Disi Social

Community Development Centre on the edge of Wadi Rum. The centre serves several localities and Bedouin tribes by offering community development as well as women's and children's programmes, said the QAF statement.

In conjunction with the opening of the centre, the women also visited the Wadi Rum Agricultural Project, which is a successful example of a "greening the desert" scheme, said QAF.

According to Princess Basma, "this visit contributed extensively to furthering the understanding of the American people of Jordan as a country, its people and efforts made in the field of development as well as cementing the friendship between the American and Jordanian people."

The delegation was accompanied on the visit by Virginia Egan, wife of the U.S. ambassador to Jordan, Wesley William Egan.

The operatic beauty of Katia Ricciarelli to shine over Amman

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — In the firmament of music stars, where opera singers shine even brighter than other musicians, Katia Ricciarelli is definitely one such star.

She belongs to the rare group of talented performers who are gifted with an exceptional blend of magnificent vocal possibilities, fine musicianship, great acting, beauty and undeniable stage presence.

Under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, the National Music Conservatory-Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Italian embassy in Amman will present the Italian Prima Donna Katia Ricciarelli, accompanied on the piano by Professor Vincenzo Scaler, for a one night only benefit performance at the Philadelphia Hotel in Amman, on Tuesday.

During her brilliant career, of 25 years, Ms. Ricciarelli has sung with Placido Domingo, José Carreras,

Luciano Pavarotti, José Van Dam, and under the baton of Herbert Von Karajan, Claudio Abbado, Sir Georg Solti, Lorin Maazel and Riccardo Muti.

A discography of more than 30 famous operas, recorded with major labels like EMI, Sony and D.G., spans from Rossini (1792-1868), Donizetti (1797-1848), Bellini (1801-1901), to Bizet (1838-1975), and Puccini (1858-1924). What else could be added?

The "Grande Soprano" was particularly remarkable in her role of Desdemona in Franco Zeffirelli's film version of Othello, with Placido Domingo as Othello.

Pianist Vincenzo Scaler, an Italian-American born in New Jersey, is one of the most sought-after accompanists. His name has also been linked to conductors like Claudio Abbado and Carlos Kleber, and to singers like Montserrat Caballé as well as José Carreras in his recording of the great tenor's "Comeback Concerts."

The programme of the exceptional concert in Amman



Katia Ricciarelli

will include pieces by Sarti, Vivaldi, Haendel, Rossini (Caozonetta Spagoolia, etc.), Tosti, Catalani and Puccini ("Tu Che Di Gel Sei Cinta" from Turandot). Whatever the weather

forecast Tuesday night, for all music lovers, here in Amman the sky will be clear and the stars will shine. The proceeds of the recital will go to benefit the National Music Conservatory.

Obeidat says experience of U.N. handling of Hebron massacre proves might still rules

'Power continues to be the only viable language in the world'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Recent international developments and the emergence of the new world order have had adverse, and dangerous consequences on the security and stability of third world countries, said Senator Ahmad Obeidat, and international forums have produced little in addressing the predicaments of the developing world.

In an address to the 91st International Parliamentary Union (IPU) meeting in Paris Saturday, Mr. Obeidat criticised the policies of the major world powers, saying that such policies have helped to deepen the concept among third world nations that power continues to be the only viable language in the world, and that the

interests of the powers, which dominate and influence international resolutions, are held above all other considerations.

He said the U.N. Security Council's handling of regional conflicts and the occupation of other countries by force as well as human rights violations are directed by biased attitudes and double standards.

Senator Obeidat strongly criticised the U.N. Security Council's slow-paced handling of the Hebron massacre. Furthermore, he said the Security Council failed to take appropriate measures to ensure international protection for the Palestinian people under Israeli rule.

Referring to the situation in Iraq, Mr. Obeidat said that the



Ahmad Obeidat

sanctions are still in place though there are no longer justifications for their continuation.

In Bosnia and in occupied Palestine acts of repression and violence continue unabated as a result of the major powers disregard for the principles of justice and right, added Mr. Obeidat.

Such policies, he said, have dismayed and angered Arab and Muslim nations which are becoming increasingly convinced that the West is determined to weaken them and drain their resources. Mr. Obeidat called on the French Parliamentary Committee, the host group of the IPU meeting to work towards ensuring human rights for all people.

He also appealed to various world organisations to act within the United Nations to achieve justice and peace.

TCC, Siemens sign contract for 13,000 telephone lines

AMMAN (Petra) — The Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) and the German electronics firm Siemens Saturday signed a contract for the installation of electronic telephone exchanges in Mafraq Governorate which will make available 13,000 new telephone lines and have a capability of 19,000, according to Walid Dweik, TCC acting director general.

According to Mr. Dweik the total cost of the project was expected to reach \$5.5 million.

Under the terms of the agreement Siemens will install 15 electronic exchanges, which should provide adequate service to all the towns and villages within Mafraq Governorate, said Mr.



Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) Siemens Saturday sign a contract to install an electronic telephone exchange in Mafraq Governorate (Petra photo)

Dweik, adding that the number of exchanges can be increased to 24 in the future. He said that as part of the agreement Siemens will also set up a national and international telephone exchange in

Tlaa Al Ali district in Amman to boost existing telephone service in the capital. Mr. Dweik said the German company has also agreed to train Jordanian engineers and technicians on the operation and maintenance of the new exchanges in training courses in Germany.

He said the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is financing the TCC project.

JORDAN TIMES TEL 667171

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Royal Decree approves Abu Odeh appointment

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree Saturday was issued approving a Cabinet decision appointing Jordan's Permanent Representative at the United Nations Adnan Ahn Odeh as the Kingdom's non-resident ambassador to Panama. The decree also approves the appointment of Jordanian Ambassador to India Kamal Hasa as the non-resident ambassador to Nepal.

Farmers' debts to be rescheduled

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Saturday said the government will reschedule debts of the

Jordan valley farmers who did not sell their agricultural produce this year. In a meeting with a delegation representing the farmers, Dr. Majali said the government was working on plans to establish a company which comprises all landowners in the Jordan Valley as shareholders in accordance with the size of their property. The company, a public shareholding company, will be charged with establishing a parallel market in the Jordan Valley and will be authorised to manage some agricultural projects, said Dr. Majali. At the outset of the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on the demands and needs of the farmers who have been complaining for several months about their inability to repay their debts.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by artist Ahmed Nawar at Balika' Art Gallery in Fuhais (daily from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 720902).
- ★ Computer exhibition at the National Amman University.
- ★ Photo exhibition of the Hashemites and the heroic deeds of the Jordanian Armed Forces at the Jordan Zaitounah University.
- ★ Exhibition by Iraqi artists Husam Khader and Rahim Al Shaykhi at Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Jordanian-Iraqi contemporary exhibition by over 80 artists at Ain Art Gallery in Wadi Saqra (9:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 644451).
- ★ Exhibition by Syrian artists Abdul Manan Shamma, Khalid Ahmza, and Mandouh Kashlan at Ab'ad Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of sculptures and drawings by Jordanian sculptor Samer Tabbas. Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists at Darat Al Fumm of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweideh (Tel. 643251/2).
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Writers Do Draw" by Jamal Naji, Ibrahim Nasrallah, and Farouq Wadi at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by Syrian artists Abdul Qader Azzouz

- and Aoun Al Droubi at the Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture (Tel. 695291).
- ★ Exhibition by Iraqi artist Turki Abdullah at the Baladna Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition by artist Shawkat Al Rabai'y at the Orfali Art Gallery in Um Utheina (Tel. 826932).
- ★ Book exhibition at the Safeway International.

THE FIRST AMMAN THEATRE FESTIVAL

- ★ Drama entitled "A Very Symbolic Play" at the main theatre at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- ★ Drama entitled "Kawalees" at the studio theatre at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.

FILM

- ★ Film entitled "Firefox" at the American Centre at 5:00 p.m. (135 minutes).

LECTURE AND SEMINAR

- ★ Lecture entitled "Islam and Politics" by Dr. L. Carl Brown, professor of foreign affairs at Princeton University, at the headquarters of the Progress and Justice Party in Jabal Amman at 7:00 p.m.
- ★ Seminar entitled "Our Culture Vis-a-vis The Challenges of Normalisation" by Dr. Sultan Al Qasou, Mr. Mwaffaq Mahadin, and Mr. Subhi Taha at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

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HIS MAJESTY THE KING HUSSEIN

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NATIONS CLOSER IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TIES

Jordan Times

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Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4
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Sunday's Economic Pulse

There is still time to review sales tax

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

The Finance Committee of the Lower House of Parliament took five weeks of extensive hearings to give its conditional blessing to the sales tax law. The committee introduced many changes in the text of the sales tax law as possible to make a point. The point is that the committee cannot be taken for granted and that it does not have a rubber stamp to approve the governments' requests as they are.

Some of the alterations produced by the committee make sense, such as deferring the second stage of the law (value added tax) for a minimum of five years instead of three, making the list of exempted items part of the law instead of leaving it to the discretion of the Council of Ministers and reducing the registration threshold to JD 100,000 instead of JD 200,000.

But the committee went on to the heart of the law, when it reduced the rate on luxurious goods from 20 per cent to 10 per cent and the general rate from 10 per cent to 7 per cent. It also expanded the list of exempted goods.

With these two changes, the treasury will lose over 40 per cent of the revenue that the tax was supposed to generate. Assuming that the excise rate on certain commodities, such as

cigarettes and alcohol will not be touched, the net loss of revenue will be in the order of JD 45 million a year.

The original list of exemptions was already extensive. It covered 69.7 per cent of the average family budget. Further expansion was not warranted, except for the benefit of the image of the committee as a protector of the poor and limited-income groups.

The main concern of the original law was to preserve price stability, so that the introduction of the law will not result in major price fluctuations. The majority of the commodities were supposed to maintain the same rate i.e., the new sales tax rate will be equal to the old consumption tax rate. The committee disturbed this objective by reducing almost all rates, which will work to the benefit of retailers and wholesalers, not the consumers, because the market already absorbed the present price.

It would have been understood if the committee introduced the rate of 7 per cent or even 5 per cent to be applicable to commodities which were not subject to consumption tax before. But to reduce the tax rate, already in use with no problem, was not necessary socially or justified financially.

It may not be too late to make the correction. The Parliament did not start debating the law and the report of the Finance Committee. For good or bad, it is the practice of the Parliament to debate issues all over again, restarting from zero, and not to depend heavily on the findings and recommendations of the specialised committees. In many instances those recommendations were turned down to the benefit of the original text submitted by the government. Hopefully, this will be the case regarding most of the amendments recommended by the Finance Committee.

The chairman of the committee argued that the proceeds of the sales tax will reduce the deficit of the budget substantially, and that will encourage the IMF to press for further reductions of the deficit; so why not space the reduction of the deficit over more years? This is obviously a bad argument, because it suggests that the IMF is more eager to make Jordan financially independent and self-sufficient than the Finance Committee itself. If an objective is desirable and achievable, we should accomplish it as soon as possible. Once the deficit disappears totally, we shall no more need to have an adjustment programme supervised by the IMF.

Shulamit bares the 'sin'

SHULAMIT ALONI, leader of the Israeli Meretz party and minister of communication in Yitzhak Rabin's coalition government, has once again become the target of venomous attacks by Zionist religious parties and right-wing groups. Members of the Labour Party, with whom Aloni is allied, and even fellow liberals from Meretz, have not spared her the criticism that is intended mainly to appease the ultra-nationalists and the extremists and cover up for the brutality and blunders of the army, Israel's sacred cow.

Aloni had, in an interview with Radio Israel, levelled the strongest criticism at the army by a serving minister in a long time. She criticised her country's military establishment, which in effect is a senior partner of each Israeli government in setting and executing policies, for its handling of the attack against three Palestinian fighters holed up in a house in the centre of Hebron in which heavy weapons were used resulting in great collateral damage. The minister described the army's operation in a city under curfew as "a celebration that should never have been permitted," in a clear indication of her and many other people's unhappiness over the army's laxity in and disregard for protecting the Palestinians as revealed in testimonies to the commission set up to investigate the Feb. 25 Hebron massacre.

Aloni also infuriated the Israeli establishment by calling for the removal of Jewish settlers from Hebron because "their settlement is born in sin." "By being there," she said in the interview "they are turning the political dispute into a religious war." That naturally did not sit well with her detractors, since they have been maintaining all along that it is the Arabs and Muslims who seek a religious war, not the Jewish fundamentalists.

Aloni, to her credit, did also talk about the latter, when she reminded fellow Jews that "whoever opened a synagogue in the (Ibrahimi Mosque) is guilty of the most vile, ugly provocation." To this, Ariel Sharon retorted that "the only reason we are here is because of ties to our ancient homeland and historical sites like Hebron." Sharon's response reveals the thinking of the Israeli establishment that rejects all criticism from within, especially that which touches on the claims on which the Israeli state was established. However, myopic Israeli leaders should be grateful to Aloni who recognises the shortcomings inherent in the thinking of the Israeli leadership, shortcomings that do not only endanger the Palestinians but the Jews as well. After all, as Aloni herself said, "Let (the Israelis) not forget that the God of the Muslims has many, many more troops than the God of Jews," when referring to religious rights inside Haram Al Ibrahimi and elsewhere in Palestine.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

DISCUSSING THE Arab League Council meeting in Cairo Saturday Al Dustur daily said that the Arab Nation does not want the foreign ministers meeting there to issue statements and sets of recommendations, but rather announce a decision on taking practical steps towards reestablishing genuine solidarity among Arab countries. The Arabs should rise to the level of the Israeli challenge and must take into account the current atrocities practiced by Israel in the occupied territories and Israel's defiance of U.N. resolutions and insistence to hold on to the occupied Arab lands, demanded the daily. The time has come for the Arab regimes to reconcile in view of the common threats to their existence; and the Arab League meeting in Cairo offers a good opportunity for them to do so, said the daily. The paper stressed that the Arabs must take a collective action in the face of Israel's continued attempts to escape the implementation of U.N. resolutions and its continued acts of blackmail against the Arabs and the world community at large, said the daily. It said that Jordan hopes the Arab League Council would open the way for the first step towards solidarity and reconciliation.

TAHER AL Udwan, a columnist in Al Dustour daily, criticised the Ministry of Supply's policies concerning the olive oil supplies noting that the local oil producers are continually facing marketing problems. The ministry does not provide any protection for the oil producers in Jordan and is importing Tunisian oil to flood the market, rendering the local production useless, charged the writer. He said that the ministry has lately imported 7,000 tonnes of olive oil from Tunisia, forgetting about its pledge to the local producers that this step would not be taken in order to help them market their own produce. In other countries the government normally allocates funds to promote the sale of the local agricultural products, but in Jordan the Ministry of Supply tends to take measures that are considered detrimental to the interest of our farmers, continued the writer. He said that the Ministry of Supply can now buy the local produce for marketing it in Jordan and abroad so that it can come to the help of the distressed oil producers in Jordan.

Peace talks For the sake of martyrs and of peace

By Ali Abunimah

I am sure that I was not alone in feeling a deep sense of disappointment and disillusionment when it was announced that the PLO had decided on an early return to negotiations with Israel, only a month after the atrocity committed at the Ibrahimi Mosque on the black day of Feb. 25, 1994.

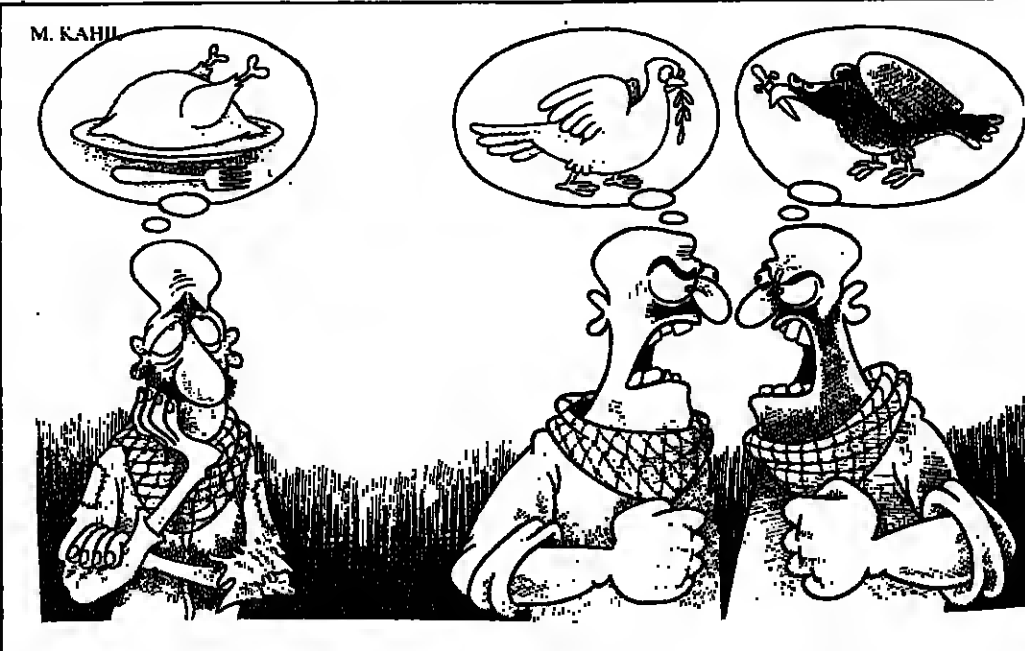
The usual argument deployed by unquestioning supporters of the peace process is to ask "What alternative do we have?" and to brand any of their opponents as extremists and rejectionists. But such people are hiding the full story, and there are several things that must be remembered.

First of all, the Security Council resolution condemning the Hebron massacre, and the U.S. abstention on the paragraph calling Jerusalem an occupied territory, deals an historic blow to the Arah cause. By acquiescing this sham resolution, the PLO has given a blessing to the long-standing Israeli claim that Jerusalem shall be its "united and eternal" capital city.

Recall that on Nov. 27, 1989, then U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Representative Thomas Pickering, stated to the U.N. General Assembly, that:

"Since the end of the 1967 war, the United States has regarded Israel as the occupying power in the occupied territories, which includes the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. The United States considers Israel's occupation to be governed by the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention concerning the protection of civilian populations under military occupation" (testimony before 3rd committee of UNGA, Nov. 27, 1989).

The Clinton administration's threat to veto the Hebron resolution if it is not allowed to abstain on the clause repeating exactly the position given by Mr. Pickering with regard to Jerusalem, gives the lie to American claims that it is an honest broker. If the peace process is bearing fruit, then it is a bitter fruit indeed. The PLO should have pointed out the hypocrisy of the U.S. position and insisted that the



Americans reiterate their long-standing position that Jerusalem is in fact occupied. Instead, Israel has been allowed to take a further step forward in fulfilling the historic aims of the Zionist programme.

The second thing we must reflect on is that if in the past seven years there has been any progress at all in the peace process, it is entirely due to the sacrifices made by the martyrs of the intifada and the Palestinian population who continues to offer every resistance to the brutality of occupation and to pay a very heavy price.

"It is insensitive to view the tragedy of Hebron as a political opening. The alternative, however, which tragically seems to be turning into reality, is to allow those martyrs to have perished in vain."

It was neither the skill of leaders, nor the resolutions of Arab summits that brought Israel to the negotiating table, but the increasing political, diplomatic and economic cost of maintaining an inhuman occupation under the floodlights of world attention. Many Israelis compare the effects of the intifada to that of the Vietnam war, on American morale. Israelis

are tired of fear and insecurity, and have come to the realisation that force can kill and maim thousands of individuals, but it can never crush the spirit of a nation. The purpose of Arab participation in the peace process must be to exploit these facts and trends to the benefit of the Arab cause, instead of helping Israel to relieve itself of the pressure it feels, both internally and externally.

By what right do the "heroes" of Oslo sell the achievements of the people, paid for in blood, for such a cheap price? The intifada, like the Resistance in wartime Europe, is one of our greatest political and strategic assets. Now, however, it is being thrown away and thwarted by precisely those people who have gained most in stature from it, and made no sacrifices themselves.

Even those who were most sceptical about the current peace process might have tempered their grief and anger at the Hebron massacre with some hope. Hope that the intolerable situation that it exposed, and the truths about the nature of the occupation, might finally provide a real opportunity for the PLO to capitalise on the world's sympathy and outrage, to squeeze from Israel the minimum concessions on matters of vital principle necessary to guarantee the credibility of the peace process.

It is true that the negotiations must continue, but they

must be based on radically different premises. First, the PLO must abandon the notion that negotiation is synonymous with capitulation. Second, the PLO must demand from Israel a clear statement about what lies at the end of the tunnel. If Israel is so keen on peace, as Rabin and Peres never tire of saying, then let Israel make clear and substantial concessions.

Though Israel is negotiating from a far stronger position than the PLO, a careful assessment of Israeli aims, past strategies and the character of Rabin himself, could lead to a relatively decent outcome for the Palestinians. While Arab strategic assets are few, they are, like the intifada, important ones. They must be used wisely and not squandered in empty gestures for the sake of short-term personal gain.

Sadly though, for reasons that are hard to understand, the PLO has thrown the present opportunity to the wind. Some may say that it is insensitive to view the tragedy at Hebron as a political opening. The alternative, however, which tragically seems to be turning into reality, is to allow those martyrs to have perished in vain. If that comes to pass, then all of us, not just the PLO, must bow our heads in shame.

Ali Abunimah is a doctoral student at the University of Chicago, Dept. of Political Science. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

'Removing settlements removes economic, security burdens on Israel'

By Gershon Baskin

THERE IS a significant misconception among Israelis and Palestinians alike that the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DOP) signed in Washington on Sept. 13 precludes the possibility of confronting the settlements issue now without "opening up" the document itself.

This argument is even made by those directly involved in the negotiations. Prime Minister Rabin has stated on more than one occasion that the settlement question is a final-status issue and therefore can only be dealt with in three years' time.

Yasser Arafat and other PLO officials have said that the DOP must be opened up in order to deal with settlements now.

The truth is that it is possible to begin negotiations now over

the status of the settlements. The provisions for this are within the text of the DOP itself. The agreement does not state that final-status negotiations will begin three years into the process. Rather, it states: "They will commence as soon as possible, but no later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period."

With regard to the interim period itself, the DOP does not say that it will last five years; but that it is a period "not exceeding" five years.

The only direct mention of the future status of the settlements in the DOP is not with regard to their staying in place for five years. Rather, the settlements are defined as one of the final-status issues which will be negotiated "as soon as possible."

The DOP states that until the final status of the settlements is defined, Israel will retain full responsibility for their security.

It is clearly understood by both sides that the settlement issue is the most complex aspect of the internal security discussions. The settlements themselves place a huge burden on the Israeli army and security forces. They also place a huge burden on the economy.

The advantages of moving into further negotiations on the issue now are quite clear. It would strengthen the hand of the PLO and the few remaining supporters of the DOP within the Palestinian ranks.

Removing problematic settlements in the midst of the Palestinian population (Hebron, Jericho, Kfar Darom and Netzarim, etc.) would alleviate one of the key security and economic burdens on Israel. A major source of Israeli agents provocateurs opposed to the DOP would also be removed, thereby limiting the likelihood of violent clashes.

Within the Israeli public

there is already widespread disillusionment with the "Greater Land of Israel" vision. Nearly one-third of the settlers are willing to leave if the government would only help them do so. Once the possibility of leaving opens up, many more settlers will follow. This is particularly true of the 68 settlements containing fewer than 50 families.

The entire peace process would benefit from confronting the settlement issue now. The prime minister needs no longer hide behind what the DOP says or doesn't say.

Moving on this issue now would turn the Hebron massacre from a tragic event into a pivotal moment that brings peace closer.

The writer is Israeli director of the Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information. This article is reprinted from the Jerusalem Post.

LETTERS

Selling the sales tax

To the Editor:

A roundtable debate over the sales tax which took place late last week at the Amman Chamber of Commerce, in which the participants were (Engineering Association President) Laith Shbeilat, (economist) Fahed Fanek, (customs Director) Mohammad Al Jamal and (Director of Consumer Society) Mohammad Obeidat revealed a number of points that could be of interest to your readers:

— It was obvious throughout the debate that opposite sides of the debate (Mr. Shbeilat and the majority of the audience on one side, and the three other participants on the other) were using the issue at hand to express their views regarding the government's general socio-economic policies, which the former group was clearly against and the latter was for.

— The supporters and peddlers of the sales tax, led by Dr. Fanek, used two main arguments. One is that this law is something we cannot avoid because it is imposed on us and that the consequences of its rejection by Jordan would be devastating to the economy, an argument the government avoids to publicise. The second argument is that the effect of this tax would be minimal on the low-income groups and average on the middle class, while the main burden would fall on the shoulders of the rich.

The fact that this tax is imposed on commodities and services and not on certain sectors of the society leads one to think that the supporters and peddlers of this tax, by using such an argument, are encouraging social discrimination and consolidating class separation. In other words, it sounds as if these people are saying that the poor should not eat, drink, wear or use any of the commodities and services used by the middle and upper classes. The middle class then has the same problem as the poor vis-a-vis the upper class. The two lower classes should not even aspire to move up the "social ladder."

— When the supporters of the sales tax posed the question of what alternatives we have, they were harassed with answers, such as cracking down on corruption, cutting government expenditure, improving the collection of income and other taxes (which are imposed on certain sectors of society and not on commodities and services), supporting local industries and agriculture, and so on.

In conclusion, it seems that despite of the long time the proposed sales tax has been under the microscope and in spite of the extreme external pressure we are facing to legislate it into law, a more frank, professional, scientific and open debate should be carried out concerning the whole issue, in conjunction with the overall socio-economic policies of our country, in a bid to get the facts of the effect of such a law on all sectors of society and all sectors of the economy.

If last Thursday's debate showed anything, it was that everybody had a conflicting set of figures, information and arguments which each one considered as fact.

Mohammad Atiyeh,
Amman.

Jordan's lead

To the Editor:

I want to make a few general remarks about three articles by Dr. Ahmad Majdoubeh, "The new Arab order" (Jordan Times, Dec. 30-31, 1993), "Arab reconciliation: The need for a summit" (Jan. 27-28, 1994) and "The Yemeni agreement, the emerging Jordanian role in the Arab Nation" (Feb. 24-25, 1994).

a) One should notice that the points-dealt with are about the common Arab good, regardless of the various attitudes and orientations; in the end, the message contained in the said articles has, I am sure, reached the very heart of the Arab society.

b) The articles are a serious endeavour by the author to remind us of some of our recent problems, which we (often) ignore. Also, he offers a new perspective on how to bring about solutions for addressing the Arab situation.

c) The articles are neutral and reject bigotry and naive patriotism.

The common thing the writer calls for in the three articles is working hard to achieve what we call "unity". In one of his articles, he discusses this point wisely, concentrating on what he calls "coordination", since he believes that it works better than unity, especially at this crucial stage. He also says: "coordination neither ignores nor undermines the political, economic, social and cultural autonomy/independence of each Arab country."

But here my opinion is different; I believe that the Arabs will be stronger if they work towards unity, not simply coordination. To reach unity, we should start with coordination. Unity (I believe) is a chain consisting of stages starting with coordination. Coordination needs a workable basis and constructive dialogues and logical debates. So the Arabs have to forget their differences, open a new page and get to work together to find solutions for their common problems.

In his last article, the writer talks about the role that Jordan plays on the Arab stage; he sees that role in consultation, dialogue and respect of the views of others. Jordan always stands with our Arab brothers, specially, when they are in need of help.

Yes, I feel Jordan is indeed qualified to play the role of the brother, advisor and honest broker. The Arab World needs this new sense of "leadership."

Eiad Najib Badr,
P.O. Box 2262,
Yarmouk University,
Irbid.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Majali briefs Cabinet on talks with U.S. envoy

(Continued from page 1)

consent to the entry of Palestinian police force to Gaza and Jericho and Hebron even before a final arrangement had been reached.

According to Dr. Anani, the prime minister also discussed with Mr. Ross the powers that would be transferred to Palestinian autonomy authorities throughout the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip with the exception of Jerusalem and Israeli settlements.

Dr. Anani said that during Saturday's session the Cabinet reviewed "campaigns levelled against Jordan by external parties."

"He said the ministers briefly reviewed a statement by the London-based human rights organisation Amnesty International, noting that the statement loaded Jordan for the democratisation process and political developments in the Kingdom."

The statement, however, criticised some of the secondary restrictions imposed by the Press and Publications Law and the executions of some common criminals, Dr. Anani

said.

Dr. Anani said the Cabinet heard reports by the information and interior ministers who noted that "suspect campaigns against Jordanian democracy on the part of the Israeli media were continuing." He said that these campaigns "have their own evil objectives and are in line with the current pressures exercised against Jordan to force it to change its national policies and its stands at the negotiating table."

During the cabinet session, the prime minister reaffirmed Jordan's principled stands, stressing that the Kingdom was seeking "a just durable and comprehensive peace on all fronts and that Jordan was adhering to the agenda it has signed with Israel demanding that all outstanding issues, including the occupied territory, Jordan's water rights, and the problem of refugees be discussed in full."

He said that without acceptable solutions for these issues, Jordan would not conclude any peace deals with Israel.

Arab League opens meeting

(Continued from page 1)

"astonished" that after the boycott could even be discussed before peace is achieved and Israel vacates occupied Arab territories.

"This is Syria's position," he said. "And I believe it is the same for the majority of Arab countries."

An Arab League official said that all signals he was receiving indicated the Arabs would uphold all levels of the boycott.

Delegates at the meeting opposed efforts by Oman and Qatar to end the boycott on firms doing business with Israel, a diplomat close to the league said.

The two Gulf oil states recently began "intensive efforts" to ease the embargo, but "this campaign did not win the approval" of other Arab countries because of the Hebron massacre, the diplomat said.

"All the other Arab countries want to maintain the indirect boycott" affecting companies dealing with Israel, the diplomat said.

The speeches at the opening session concentrated on the Hebron massacre.

Speakers demanded that Israel disarm Jewish settlers, dismantle all settlements in the occupied territories and withdraw to the pre-1967 borders immediately.

The PLO's Farouk Kadoumi explained why the Palestinians were reluctant to resume talks with Israel on self-rule until they felt Palestinians were safe.

Foreign ministers and representatives from 20 of the 22 league members are attending the meeting — those except Libya and Somalia.

Foreign Minister said Mohammad Said of the Com-

oro Islands, making his country's debut appearance at a league meeting, invited the ministers to hold their next meeting in Morocco.

The tiny Indian Ocean state joined the league in November.

Jordan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan on Saturday described the Feb. 25 Hebron massacre as the "ugliest crime of our times."

In an address at the opening session of the meeting, Mr. Hassan said: "This crime proves that racist trends in Israel have the freedom to do what they wish having the occupation authorities to cover up for their crimes."

Mr. Hassan said Israeli crimes continued after the massacre and have culminated in the March 24 crime committed after the adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 904.

"The ugly crime in Hebron and the ensuing Israeli repressive measures against Palestinian living under occupation, especially in Hebron, clearly show the dire need for a unified Arab position condemning the Israel and exposing its intentions," he said.

"Following the heinous crime, we in Jordan have moved at the Arab and international levels. We held contacts with the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council to explain Jordan's condemnation of the crime and we have called for providing protection for the unarmed Palestinian people and demanded that the international community shoulder its responsibilities, stressing the need to remove settlements from the occupied Arab territories," he said.

Israel-PLO talks continue

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinian police in parts of the occupied territories to begin as early as next week.

In their landmark agreement signed at the White House last September, Israel and the PLO envisioned the creation of a 8,000-strong Palestinian police force to operate in the Gaza Strip and Jericho after an Israeli withdrawal from those areas.

The U.S. official said that following the massacre, the parties now saw the urgency of beginning to implement the agreement quickly. Both Israel and the PLO wanted the Palestinian police force to begin deploying even before all the details of an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho were nailed down.

"They won't all go in at once. You would have relatively small tranches going in and they'd be phased in over a

period of time," said the Clinton administration official.

These detachments would begin to prepare the ground for their colleagues by developing installations, communications network and operating routines.

They would also need to sort out day-to-day relations with Israeli forces which would continue to have overall responsibility for security in the territories.

"There is a very strong convergence in terms of recognising the mutual stake that the Israelis and Palestinians had in changing the realities on the ground," the unnamed administration official said. He called it "one of the more encouraging aspects" of the negotiations Israel and the PLO are holding with the assistance of American, Egyptian and Norwegian diplomats.

Bouez says peace talks with Israel are sterile

(Continued from page 1)

The Lebanese government supported resistance against Israel as long as the Jewish state maintained troops in the nine-kilometre-deep buffer strip in South Lebanon, he said.

"Any country in the world that does not have firm guarantees or does not have the means to liberate its land through diplomatic channels or through its army cannot prevent or fight its people when they want to liberate their land."

"What we demand is an

Israeli commitment. We are not saying that when the last (Israeli) soldier leaves we will see if we will stop the resistance."

"We are saying we prefer that Israel make a public commitment... and this opens the way for us to make a military committee to draw a timetable for the withdrawal and then it will be the responsibility of the Lebanese state to end this phenomenon (a resistance)."

"But the Lebanese state is not willing to become a guardian of the Israeli borders or protector of the Israeli occupation."

Jordan firm on assigning responsibility

(Continued from page 1)

Hebron's Ibrahim Mosque on Feb. 25.

The resolution reaffirmed that Jerusalem was part of the Israeli-occupied territories, but Washington abstained on that part of the draft when it was voted on paragraph by paragraph. The resolution as a whole was then adopted without a vote.

Referring to Mr. Abu Odeh's reported remark, the PLO mission expressed "its astonishment over such a statement."

To have "done that would have amounted to total submission to illegitimate requests from the United States administration on this important issue," the statement said.

In the interview with Al Hayat Mr. Abu Odeh reflected statements made by His Majesty King Hussein in an interview with AFP last week, in which he said the U.S.'s abstention during the voting session could have been avoided by not mentioning Jerusalem at all in the resolution by only referring to the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 as the areas where the Fourth Geneva Convention is applicable.

Dr. Anani said that Jordan felt that the Security Council resolution could not be seen only from the perspective of what its wording was but had to be judged by its ramifications and the reaction it invoked.

"One looks at the content of the resolution and also reactions it brings," Dr. Anani said.

He explained that Jordan had considered the reaction towards the resolution when it assessed its position from the inclusion of the wording on Jerusalem and the U.S. abstention on that part.

"Had the U.S. vetoed that part, then I would have said that it was not a good decision," Dr. Anani said. "If everyone agrees, including the U.S., then I would have considered it a gain."

"But when there is an abstention, then it is obvious that the issue has been left for future debate, and that is what happened," he said.

The information minister, who has played a key role in Jordan's negotiations with Israel, said that a chain of reactions was caused by the U.S.'s abstention on the Jerusalem part of the resolution.

"First, several Israeli officials considered the U.S.'s position a new one towards Jerusalem," favouring Israeli claims that the city, annexed by Israel shortly after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, was its "eternal and united" capital.

The second reaction was from Washington's ambassador to the U.N., Madeline Albright, who, in a speech she delivered to the Security Council in reference to the resolution, said that the U.S. does not consider territories occupied in the 1967 war as "occupied Palestinian territory."

The third reaction was from American Jewish leader Leicester Pollack, who after a meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton along with 50 other Jewish leaders, quoted the U.S. president as saying that he and his administration consider Jerusalem "the united capital of the State of Israel."

The fourth reaction was from Mr. Clinton himself. Dr. Anani pointed out that while the U.S. president said that his position on the status of Jerusalem had not changed, "he did not refute his statements to Pollack."

"He left the whole issue to

the realm of suspicion, and appears to have changed the status of Jerusalem from being occupied to negotiable," Dr. Anani said. "One must know that there is the logic of the resolution and not just the text."

Dr. Anani added that Jordan also believed that while the inclusion of Jerusalem in the resolution would have been excellent, "ideally that should come in both in the preamble to the resolution as well as the operative clauses." Resolution 904 pinpoints Jerusalem as part of the Israeli-occupied territories in a preamble paragraph but not in an operative clause which would have been binding.

"There were two choices," Dr. Anani said. "Either you include Jerusalem knowing for sure that all parties will agree to its inclusion and this would have been a perfect situation, or 'you leave the issue vague but in agreement with your position that all the territories are occupied and thereby Jerusalem is part of the occupied territories.'"

Dr. Anani argued that the PLO, by letting it be known that the three-week delay in reaching agreement over the draft resolution was over the issue of Jerusalem, put itself in a "difficult position."

"It couldn't withdraw the word after negotiating it for so long, because it would have appeared to have allowed the fragmentation of the issue," Dr. Anani said. "Then it would look that you excluded it from the general implication of 'occupied territories.'"

Jordan, according to Dr. Anani, is worried that with Washington's abstention set a precedent which could mean that in the future the issue of Jerusalem was to be taken to the Security Council for vote, "the U.S. would base its vote on this precedent."

Dr. Anani said he believed the inclusion of Jerusalem in the resolution "caused an American reaction and several statements which only contributed to creating more ambiguity and confusion over the status of Jerusalem."

"For these logical reasons, Jordan had a different approach (from the PLO's)," Dr. Anani concluded, adding that Jordan "supported the resolution as a text and as a decision but that did not mean that we did not believe that this was not necessarily the best resolution."

The Kingdom, Dr. Anani pointed out, agreed with the PLO's call, made in the Friday statement, "for a united Arab front to confront the indications of a change in the American position on this important issue."

"Of course we also feel that there needed complete Arab coordination on this issue before it was put to vote," Dr. Anani said. "But there wasn't."

King Hussein, in the interview with AFP, blamed the lack of inter-Arab coordination for the U.S. abstention and said that the state of affairs in the Arab scene had led to the "mishandling" of the Security Council resolution.

"The lack of inter-Arab coordination in critical and difficult circumstances could lead to big losses and negative consequences for higher Arab interests," the King said.

The King, after being alerted to the pattern of voting at that session, contacted key Arab leaders in an attempt to preempt the U.S. abstention.

Accord reached on cargo inspection at Aqaba

(Continued from page 1)

officials here describe as overzealous enforcement of the sanctions, proposed early this year that the inspections be carried out at Aqaba port by an international agency. The proposal was viewed positively by American administration officials, according to sources.

However, follow-up action on the proposal was at snail's pace, and Jordan was enraged by what appeared to be an escalation of the inspections and tightened guidelines imposed by the American-led warships patrolling the Red Sea.

At least seven Aqaba-bound vessels, including the Skyman, were denied permission to enter the Gulf of Aqaba by the enforcers of the sanctions since January this year compared to 20 during the whole 1993.

The Jordanian government repeatedly protested to the U.S. as well as the U.N. Sanctions Committee against the

"siege of Aqaba." (see separate story) The Lower House of Parliament urged the government last week to refuse to return to the U.S.-sponsored peace talks with Israel before the blockade of Aqaba is lifted and the lifting is formally announced at the U.N. Security Council.

Diplomatic sources said the inspection of the Skyman could be a "dress rehearsal" for setting up a firm mechanism for load-based inspection at Aqaba as proposed by Jordan.

Lloyds Register of London, an independent international agency which has extensive experience in cargo inspections all over the world, is tipped to be the body which would take over the inspection at Aqaba as and when the mechanism is in place.

Lloyds officials have visited Aqaba several times in the past three months to evaluate the facilities available for inspections and for talks with Jordanian shipping officials.

Political scientists, historians conference

(Continued from page 1)

agree on the principle of negotiations and a peaceful settlement," he said.

Husni Sheyab, of the University of Jordan, asked why would the U.S. exclude all other democracies in the region and elsewhere and concentrate only on Israel.

Speaking from the audience Abla Amawi, of the Applied Sciences University, said "if Israel is such a democratic country, why don't we invite it to invade the whole of the Arab World?"

Khaled Mismar, the head of the Palestinian Information Office in Amman, attempted to refute the argument that Israel is a model of democracy and countered that the mechanism of decision-making in Israel is directly linked to its prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.

"Even in its direct negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Mr. Rabin controls the whole process and he is the sole decision-maker," he said.

In his speech titled "American Strategy and the Internal Developments in the Region," Hassan Abu Taleb (Ahram) said the U.S. divides the countries in the region into the following categories: friendly states (such as Jordan, Egypt and Morocco) which it supports; the neutral countries (such as Syria) which in order for it to become a friendly state must adopt internal political openness and consideration for the U.S. interests in the region; the enemy states (such as Iraq and Libya and recently Sudan); and finally marginalised countries (such as Djibouti and Mauritania).

Mr. Abo Taleb (Ahram) said the U.S. attempts to employ the reality of the Arab states to serve its various interests in the region, such as commitment to the international sanctions against Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait.

He added that the U.S. tends to deal with the Arab countries individually rather than as a unit. "Double stan-



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Saturday addresses a meeting of political scientists and historians at the University of Jordan organised by the Centre for Strategic Studies of the university. On the podium are (sitting left to right): Dr. Mustafa Hamarnah, director of the

centre, Dr. Fawzi Gharaibeh, president of the University of Jordan, Dr. Sayed Yassin, director of Cairo's Al Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, and Dr. Usama Ghazali, president of the Arab Political Scientists Association (Photo by Rana Hussein)

dards govern the U.S. policy in the region because of the variety of its interests there."

Earlier in the morning session, titled "Current Developments in the International Environment," the scholars attempted to define the new world order and came close to admitting that the Arab World had only one option in fitting in.

Abdul Mune'm Saad (Ahram) said that countries which are not within the complex network of economic, political and social integration in Europe and Asia will remain unstable and will be characterised by chaos and violence.

Former Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, who presided over the session, highlighted the concept of the "globalisation" of the world brought about by the revolution in communications and telecommunications.

According to Radwan Abdullah of the University of Jordan, the current order is based on political, as well as economic elements. "The United States enjoys a unique

political status because it dominates the coalition of the forces which form the economic system," he said.

The conference opened under the patronage of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali who said that the Jordanian government will look to this meeting not as "just another gathering, but will view it as a milestone in the path towards the promising future."

In the opening session, Sayed Yassin, the director of the Centre for Political and Strategic Studies in Al Ahram, said "we hope to shape a concrete civilised Arab vision through Arab strategic conferences in order to present defined ideas on achieving world peace, peace in the Middle East, disarmament, third world debt and dialogue among civilisations."

Usama Ghazali, president of the Arab Political Science Association, commended the democratisation process in Jordan which, he said, made it possible to hold such an open and candid conference in Amman.

According to Fawzi Gharaibeh, president of the University of Jordan, the task of facing national and regional issues is not the sole responsibility of the government but rather it is the responsibility of establishments and individuals. Dr. Gharaibeh said that the 3-day conference is a further step in the direction of this orientation.

Mustafa Hamarnah, director of the Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) prefaced his statement by saying that the CSS has in the past two years refocused its work from issues of security and foreign policy towards areas directly related to the country's basic needs.

Therefore, Dr. Hamarnah said, it is hoped that this conference will come up with practical solutions that can help in addressing the great challenges facing Jordan and the region.

About 30 Arab political scientists and historians from Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon and Libya are participating in the conference.

N. Korea says Japan is not safe

(Continued from page 1)

military base.

The British military journal also said North Korea appears to have obtained enough plutonium to make up to two nuclear weapons.

In a special report Jane's Intelligence review said foreign estimates of how much plutonium the country now had ranged as high as 40 kilograms, with this possibly rising up to 3,000 kilograms by the year 2000.

Tensions mounted rapidly this past week as the increasingly isolated and defiant North Korea repeatedly warned of war over international efforts to curb its nuclear ambitions.



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Turkish economy totters on brink

land said foreign or trade ministers from 120 countries would sign the accords which run to 20,000 pages.

The ceremonies on April 11-15 will also be attended by associate states including Russia and China and delegates from 27 international organisations.

It is expected about 30 countries will be able to ratify the accords immediately in Marmarash. The objective is to implement them under the World Trade Organisation by Jan. 1 next year.

ANKARA (R) — Turks vote Sunday in municipal elections which will test whether they trust Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's coalition government to tackle a looming economic crisis.

Bankers said brokers predicted sharp post-election price rises, but were divided on what impact the polls would have on markets thrown into chaos by a plunging lira and soaring interest rates.

"All prices will go up after the elections, that's all we can know," said one bank's securities department manager, reflecting a mood of bleak uncertainty that has gripped the business community.

He said the government would relax price restraints on state-run companies to allow them to offset their losses.

Voters' minds are fixed on the plight of a once-vibrant economy, now sliding towards recession and possible hyperinflation with public finances in

their worst state for 15 years. Ominously, Turkey's leading consumer durable goods maker Arcelik has said it was halting production for two weeks from April 18 due to falling demand. Car manufacturers and ancillary industries have already slowed output.

The polls cannot change the party balance in parliament, but a humiliating defeat for Ms. Ciller's True Path Party (DYP) could turn her into a lame-duck leader and strengthen opposition calls for an early general election. Parliament's normal term expires in 1996.

Ms. Ciller, in power only since June, retains one popular appeal as Turkey's first woman premier, but this year's money troubles have tarnished her reputation as a U.S.-trained economist.

The lira has lost 33 per cent of its dollar value since Jan. 1 as the central bank, keen to conserve its dwindling foreign

reserves, dropped its old policy of keeping the lira overvalued.

The Istanbul Stock Exchange Index, now at 14,834, has slumped from a peak of 29,322 it reached in mid-January, as business confidence ebbed and lira interest rates spiralled higher.

"Election defeat for Ciller can send the index down to around 13,500. If the government emerges stronger, it may surge to 18,000 levels, but from then on the market will wait for new economic measures," said Tulga Kumbasar, portfolio manager at Finansbank.

The central bank has raised overnight interest rates to 45 per cent from 400 per cent, keeping the lira in a wide 23,800-24,000 range against the dollar.

Some bankers predicted another dollar surge after the polls, saying high interest rates alone can only postpone the inevitable while dramatically

increasing the government's borrowing costs.

Others expect Ms. Ciller to announce drastic economic measures which would restore confidence and stabilise the money markets.

"After the elections, people's purchasing power will go down, so nobody will rush to the foreign exchange bureaux to buy dollar and demand will fall," said the treasurer of a big private bank.

Many bankers and industrialists say inflation, now at an annual 73 per cent, will hit triple digits this year.

Turkish newspapers say Ms. Ciller's newly appointed state minister for the economy, Aykon Dogan, is preparing an austerity package to apply after the nationwide polls for mayors and local councils.

But in her election campaign, Ms. Ciller has not sought to prepare voters for the radical measures past governments have avoided.

Toxic waste exporting banned worldwide

FRANKFURT (R) — The central banks of both Germany and France pledged Friday to continue the fight against inflation but made clear they would seek the scope to cut interest rates again whenever possible.

In speeches to a Franco-German financial markets conference in Frankfurt, the governors of the two central banks also underscored the importance of monetary cooperation between France and Germany as an anchor of European integration.

Bundesbank President Hans Tietmeyer told a hall packed with bankers and monetary officials that Germany's fight against inflation was not over and the central bank could not ignore the potential inflationary threat of surging money supply.

But he added, "we will of course continue to test whether there is scope for rate cuts."

Interest-rate cuts could not,

however, be carried out at the risk of fuelling inflation. The policy of rushed rate cuts would not be in line with the aim of reducing inflationary expectations and making sure that no new inflationary expectations emerge, Mr. Tietmeyer said.

Echoing Mr. Tietmeyer's comments, Bank of France Governor Jean-Claude Triche, also stressed that the French central bank's primary aim was maintaining monetary stability.

But he noted a cut in the French intervention rate to six per cent from 6.10 per cent on Thursday showed the trend to easier money in both France and Europe had not been interrupted.

"The Bank of France will pursue its cautious and prudent policy of rate cuts," he said, emphasising, like the Germans, that this would be done in a way to ensure monetary stability.

Thursday's decision was in line with the Bank of France's policy of maintaining monetary stability, he added.

Mr. Tietmeyer told the conference that west German inflation was falling, but at 3.4 per cent for February it was "still clearly too high."

The German central banker also appeared to reject recent criticism of the Bundesbank's policy of monitoring money supply growth as a key indicator of future inflationary trends.

In the first two months of 1994, money supply has surged far beyond the Bundesbank's six per cent target ceiling for growth this year, expanding by 21.2 per cent in January and by 17.6 per cent in February.

Mr. Tietmeyer himself admitted that the latest data were distorted by special factors but insisted that the recent trend of bloated monetary growth had to be taken seriously.

GENEVA (AP)—After years of dumping toxic waste in poor nations, a U.N.-sponsored conference banned the practice Friday after overcoming opposition from the United States, Japan and Germany.

The prohibition against hazardous waste exporting also covers materials sent to developing nations for recycling, as well as for final disposal. It takes effect on Dec. 31, 1997.

The ban on hazardous waste exports was reached by ministers and officials from more than 60 nations after five days of wrangling.

It was seen as a victory for environmentalists and Third World nations which have argued that they should not be used as garbage dumps for potentially poisonous products.

"At last, the loophole of being able to export waste under the guise of recycling will be eliminated," said Kevin Stairs of the environmental group Greenpeace.

"This decision will finally

Air insurers hit hard by Lockerbie bombing

PARIS (R) — "Discredited Lyonnais," the French daily *Le Quotidien* screamed Friday, leading a chorus of outrage that taxpayers are to pay for the errors that brought the state-owned banking giant Credit Lyonnais to its knees.

The bank Thursday unveiled a loss of 6.9 billion francs (\$1.21 billion) for last year, more than tripling its 1992 deficit into one of the biggest losses in French corporate history.

To staunch the flood of red ink, the conservative government stepped in, injecting 3.5 billion francs (\$614.5 million) in cash and pledging to guarantee up to 18.4 billion francs (\$3.23 billion) of dud real estate loans.

Linking the government bail-out to the advertising slogan the bank used during its breakneck expansion — "the power to say 'yes'" — the financial daily *Les Echos* ran

the headline: "The powers-that-be say 'yes.'" Credit Lyonnais' rapid growth began in 1988, when the newly reelected socialist installed Jean-Yves Haberer as chairman.

Dubbed at the time by a British business magazine "a man with no ideas," Mr. Haberer turned out to have too many.

A believer in the concept of a "universal bank" with a range of stakes in industry, Mr. Haberer had pumped the bank's assets up by more than 80 per cent to just short of two trillion francs (\$350 billion) by the time he was sacked by the government in November. That left Credit Lyonnais the biggest bank in the world outside Japan.

The economic downturn and heavy exposure to the depressed property market and prominent misadventures turned that strategy sour.

FRANKFURT (R) — Insurance claims after the bombing of a U.S. airliner over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988 are now expected to total around \$400 million, double initial estimates, a leading German reinsurer said.

Achim Kann, chairman of Muenchener Frankona Rueder Versicherung A.G. told journalists that he jump in insurance claims followed a 1991 U.S. court ruling that Pan Am was guilty of wilful misconduct in its baggage screening procedures.

That paved the way for relatives of the victims to file individual claims for compensation. He added that the ruling against Pan Am did not alter in any way the liability of insurers.

While Pan Am, once the world's largest airline, has gone into liquidation since the 1988 bombing, it still exists as a legal entity to clear up outstanding business.

Mr. Kann said the family

an International Business Machines Corp. executive had filed the largest claim of around \$13 million. Relatives of another executive were seeking around \$9 million, making Lockerie "one of the greatest damage cases for air insurers," he said.

In the first settlement in 1992 Pan Am paid \$9.23 million to the family of a Pepsico Inc. executive killed in the bombing.

In 1990, the airline reached an out-of-court settlement with families of the Scottish dead and injured.

Insurance analysts said Pan Am's insurer, USAIG, part of United States Aircraft Underwriters Inc. could face direct damage claims amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Mr. Kann said Western air insurers were also likely to be hit by this week's Airbus A310 crash in Siberia because the machine, although operated by Aeroflot, was leased and therefore insured in the west.

South Africa eyes return to world capital markets

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Finance Minister Mamohan Singh has said that inflation would not be allowed to gain further strength.

"This challenge will be met," he said, speaking about worries that inflation could creep back up to double digits.

"Inflationary expectations will not be allowed to gain further strength," Mr. Singh added in a speech at the opening of a two-day conference on the Indian economy, organised in New Delhi by Euromoney magazine.

The annual inflation rate rose in 9.05 per cent in the week ended March 5, crossing the nine per cent mark for the first time in 69 weeks.

The inflation rate began falling from a high of almost 17 per cent in August 1991 after the government initiated a series of economic reforms in July that year.

The annual rate at the end of the 1992/93 fiscal year ending in March 1993 was seven per cent against 12.8 at the end of the 1991/92 year.

Mr. Singh said India now had foreign exchange reserves of more than \$17 billion and stockpiles of grain of almost 23 million tonnes. The exchange reserves were equivalent to seven months of imports.

He said if necessary the government would devalue the rupee.

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa is preparing to reenter world capital markets after an absence spanning much of the past decade. The multi-party Transitional Executive Council (TEC) overseeing the country ahead of next month's all-race elections has set up a special committee to prepare for a possible sovereign loan later this year. "The committee is hard at work," said Tito Mboweni, deputy head of economic planning for the African National Congress (ANC) and a prominent member of the finance sub-council. South Africa, having returned triumphantly to international capital markets in September 1991 after a six-year exile imposed by anti-apartheid sanctions, has been absent again for more than 1½ years. It withdrew in 1992 amid political violence which killed nearly 15,000 people over four years of apartheid reforms, setbacks to democracy talks and opposition by anti-apartheid groups to what they considered premature access to foreign credit while vestiges of apartheid remained. Mr. Mboweni, referring to an array of TEC panels formed to help economic policymakers lay the groundwork for a post-

South Africa, described the one handling loan as "probably one of our star committees."

But he added: "There's still quite a way to go."

He saw no return to the market until a government of national unity, to be installed after the first all-race elections on April 26-28 and widely expected to be dominated by Nelson Mandela's ANC, presented a budget for the coming year.

The budget is normally unveiled in March, but Finance Minister Derek Keys said that for the coming year it would probably be presented in August, once a new administration has settled in, although it might be earlier than that.

Finance Department Director General Esteban Calitz said there was "clearly very keen interest" abroad in South African paper. Such factors might favour a return to the market "sooner rather than later."

But some investors might be looking for firm direction on future government policies and the budget could provide an appropriate benchmark, he said.

South Africa's return to the market in 1991 met a strong welcome, persuading it to raise that year's target to 400 million German marks from 300 million, originally planned.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY MARCH 27, 1994
By Thomas S. Person, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: This Full Moon in Libra, Passover or Palm Sunday will best be spent with family and friends in contemplation and reflection on recent events that have captured your attention and focused your abilities.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Take steps to improve conditions at home and have harmonious relations. Remove any obstacles in the path of your progress to your ultimate success.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Make sure you are living according to your philosophical beliefs. Make plans to improve your social life in the days ahead and you will be happy.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Find the right outlet for your special talents. An intuitive suggestion could be erroneous now so don't follow it or there could be trouble.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Plan how to have greater abundance in the future. Show interest in developing your family members and you will have much love and appreciation.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Outline a course of action that could give you added income in the future. Plan how to stretch your budget and have more security in the future.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Put ideas to work that

will give you added prestige. A loyal friend can give valuable advice at this time for you to go what you want.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) Be sure not to comment about things you know little about. Be sensible in handling matters of communication at this time and there will be peace.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You have many creative ideas that need expression at this time. Allow time for recreational activities you enjoy with the ones you love.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Make sure that you carry through with new responsibilities you have. Show more consideration for a loved one or there could be problems.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 21) A new project you have in mind needs more study before going ahead with it. Take no chances with your health in any activity you are involved with at this time.

AQUARIUS: (January 22 to February 19) An excellent time to catch up on your correspondence. Concentrate on how to be more productive in the future and you will find much success.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 21) Be sure to have a fine social with family members early in the day. Try to please the one you are most fond of and there will be much affection present.

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MENOG

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L. the Dogma Foundation

GWEED

DETHOB

AMLAMM

I bet I can beat you!

You're on!

WHAT THE KIDS DID AT THE PARK

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: THEY

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: SINGE FLORA ENTIRE SYMBOL
Answer: When his coffee was served cold it left him — — — BOILING

THE Daily Crossword by Don Johnson

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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

- 1 Across: Norway
- 2 Down: Ewe
- 3 Across: Sings
- 4 Down: Py
- 5 Across: Average
- 6 Down: On
- 7 Across: Impulsively
- 8 Down: Staff
- 9 Across: Attendants
- 10 Down: Garry
- 11 Across: Hallways
- 12 Down: Support
- 13 Across: Rule
- 14 Down: Ministry
- 15 Across: Command
- 16 Down: Omnes
- 17 Across: Wipe
- 18 Down: Garment
- 19 Across: First
- 20 Down: Viscata
- 21 Across: Suffix
- 22 Down: Moreno
- 23 Across: Lethal
- 24 Down: Traffic
- 25 Across: Rodent
- 26 Down: Fond
- 27 Across: Humes
- 28 Down: Questionnaire
- 29 Across: Author
- 30 Down: Paradise
- 31 Across: Alumnate
- 32 Down: Swag
- 33 Across: Vindictive
- 34 Down: Scodgled
- 35 Across: Talent
- 36 Down: Fulfills
- 37 Across: Ridge
- 38 Down: Blow
- 39 Across: Existed
- 40 Down: Swims
- 41 Across: Alphabet
- 42 Down: Ours
- 43 Across: Summing
- 44 Down: Acrid
- 45 Across: Residue
- 46 Down: Neckline
- 47 Across: Off
- 48 Down: Volume
- 49 Across: Turtan
- 50 Down: Colic
- 51 Across: Beginning
- 52 Down: Tropical
- 53 Across: New Guinea
- 54 Down: School
- 55 Across: Officials
- 56 Down: Farms
- 57 Across: Donkeys
- 58 Down: Certain
- 59 Down: Isherman
- 60 Down: Small
- 61 Across: Lawyer
- 62 Down: McCann
- 63 Across: Literary
- 64 Down: Oging
- 65 Across: Cope
- 66 Down: Took
- 67 Across: Teak
- 68 Down: Sheep
- 69 Across: Tharghan
- 70 Down: Endure
- 71 Across: Wield
- 72 Down: Cheate
- 73 Across: Source
- 74 Down: Giggie
- 75 Across: Singer
- 76 Down: Bonanza
- 77 Across: Acria
- 78 Down: Kind
- 79 Across: Bravel
- 80 Down: Painting
- 81 Down: Penod

Northrop to cut 3,000 jobs by end of year

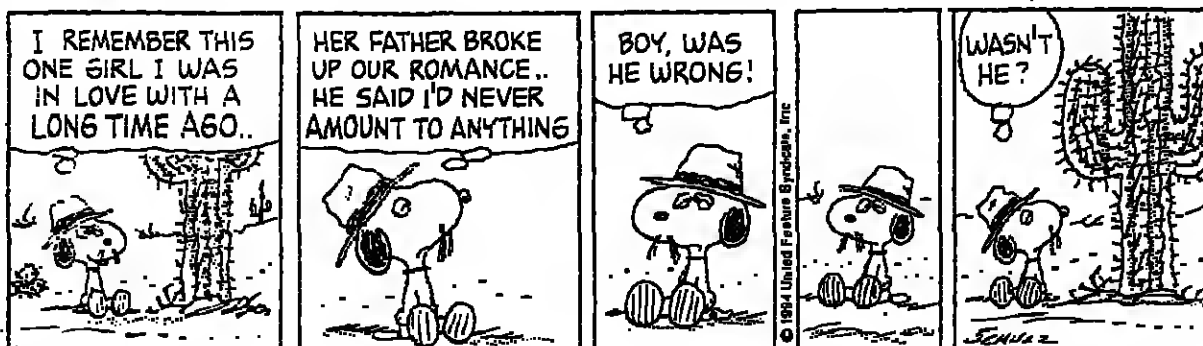
The budget for fiscal 1994/95 was designed to stimulate growth, restructure taxation and integrate the economy with the global trading system, he said.

Mr. Singh said the reforms had given the country new confidence and Indian industries, protected for almost five decades, had to learn to compete internationally.

"Indian industry has to shed its inferiority complex, I believe Indian industry is fully capable of meeting the global challenge," he stressed.

In the current year, India will bring in \$2 billion in foreign direct and portfolio investments in addition to \$3 to \$3.5 billion raised on the Euroissue market by Indian companies.

Peanuts



Mutt'n'Jeff



Bosnian Serbs step up campaign against Turkish U.N. troops

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Bosnian Serbs Saturday stepped up their campaign to prevent Turkish troops being sent to join U.N. peacekeepers in Bosnia, warning the planned deployment could have "fatal consequences."

U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali, unable to muster the forces he needs to supervise Bosnian ceasefires, has reluctantly agreed to accept Turkish troops, seen as pro-Muslim by Serbs.

Momcilo Krajisnik, a hard-line member of the Serb leadership, also cited the 500-year Ottoman occupation of Bosnia in a letter of protest to the U.N.

"Turkey has... openly sided with the Muslim side," he said. "The Serb Republic parliament charged me with warning you of the fatal consequences of this action."

The U.N. has found fewer than half of the additional troops that peacekeeping commanders want to preserve ceasefires in Sarajevo and central Bosnia while diplomatic efforts to end the two-year war continue.

Special U.S. envoy Charles Redman reached the Bosnian capital for talks with the

Muslim-led government on the implementation of a U.S.-crafted Muslim-Croat federation in Bosnia.

The Bosnian Croat parliament was expected to approve the plan Saturday and the mainly-Muslim Bosnian parliament to follow suit Monday.

Bosnian Serbs who control 70 per cent of the former Yugoslav republic have refused to join the federation or even continue talks on alternatives until the United Nations lifts sanctions against Serbian-led Yugoslavia.

The peace process headed for an impasse when the United States Friday ruled out lifting the sanctions, imposed because Yugoslavia armed, organised and financed the Bosnian Serbs, until an overall peace plan was agreed.

"We are... prepared to discuss the phased easing of sanctions once there is an agreement that has been reached and it is in the process of being implemented and the international community is satisfied it's being implemented," U.S. State Department spokesman Mike McCurry said.

But he indicated the U.S. government had not lost hope that Mr. Redman and influen-

tial Russian envoy Vitaly Churkin could cajole the Serbs into a form of federation that would get a settlement back on track.

Muslim and Croat forces hardened their ceasefire in central Bosnia with an agreement to crack down on snipers whose random attacks sow civilian terror and guarantee free traffic on roads.

Snipers will be arrested and handed over to the authorities for trial in future.

Muslim and Serb forces accused each other of continuing attacks in northern Bosnia, which has become the main war theatre since the ceasefires took hold elsewhere.

British U.N. troops in the Maglaj pocket in the region reported they destroyed a Serb bunker which fired on them Friday.

Peacekeepers' spokesman Simon McDowell said a Warrior fighting vehicle blasted the bunker with its main gun when Serbs manning it ignored warning shots from lighter calibre weapons.

He reported Serb forces around Sarajevo continued to disrupt aid convoys despite agreements to let them move freely.

The top civilian U.N. official for the former Yugoslavia said Friday he was optimistic about the chances for peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"We see the light at the end of the tunnel," said Yasush Akashi, Dr. Ghali's special envoy to the Balkans.

"For the first time in almost two years, the peace is beginning to break out," he told the U.N. Security Council.

However, more peacekeepers were needed to consolidate the progress, he said.

Mr. Akashi warned against overconfidence, saying that the current lull in fighting and move towards a peace settlement was fragile. "Mutual distrust is still very deep," he said.

Bosnian Serb shelling of Sarajevo stopped following a North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) ultimatum in February. More recently, the formation of a Bosnia Muslim-Croat federation ended sporadic fighting between those two parties.

The U.N. Council began considering the future of its peacekeepers in the former Yugoslavia Friday. The force's current mandate expires Thursday.



The body of a man killed Friday night lies in the street in Bambhayi township in Durban after a massive ANC march Friday (AFP photo)

S. African rightwingers declare Pretoria capital of white homeland

PRETORIA (AFP) — A depleted Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF) Saturday mustered about 3,000 followers to proclaim Pretoria capital of a "Volksstaat", the separate white homeland South African rightwingers are demanding.

With the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB) ordered to stay away and its founding members gone to the pro-election Freedom Front, the remaining Conservative Party hardliners gathered to hear leader Ferdi Hartzenberg lament that it was "just us and the Zulu nation left to defend our freedom."

"And we will not be responsible for the chaos that is certain to erupt if we do not get what we want, a Volksstaat," he told the khaki-clad Afrikaners. "First it was Bophuthatswana, then it was Ciskei, next it will be KwaZulu and then, my friends, it will be us."

South Africa took over Bophuthatswana black homeland on March 13 after its ruler Lucas Mangope was toppled in a popular uprising; it moved into Ciskei last Wednesday after military ruler Brigadier Oupa Gqozo stepped down in the face of a revolt by his security forces.

In a hint that the same fate may befall Mangosuthu Buthelezi's KwaZulu homeland, President F.W. de Klerk Thursday said he would send military reinforcements to the Zulu stronghold in the face of the Inkatha Freedom Party

leader's virulent anti-democracy stance.

In a bitter split over whether or not to contest South Africa's first all-race election on April 26-28, AVF founder Constand Viljoen abandoned Mr. Hartzenberg and formed the Freedom Front.

"It is just us and the Zulu nation that is still standing," Mr. Hartzenberg said. "But we are much stronger than the rest and we will fight to the bitter end."

The newly proclaimed Volksstaat capital of Pretoria was named after Dutch settler Andries Pretorius, hero of the Battle of Blood River in Natal province where he and 470 settlers routed a 12,500-strong Zulu army in a final confrontation in 1838 in a bid for domination in the province.

Despite the absence of the unruly AWB, in disgrace for its unruly behaviour in Bophuthatswana where members tried to prop up Mr. Mangope, rightwingers Saturday still targeted black journalists.

South African soldiers moved into a squatter settlement south of Durban Saturday after four people, including two toddlers, were shot dead in overnight clashes, witnesses and police said.

Witnesses said more than half a dozen armoured vehicles helped restore order in Bham-bayi after a stand-off between groups supporting the African National Congress (ANC) and the rival Inkatha Freedom Par-

ty. Police said four people including two toddlers had been shot dead in the impoverished settlement Friday night after about 100,000 ANC supporters marched through central Durban calling for the freedom to vote in strife-torn Natal province.

The children were believed to be from an Inkatha-supporting family and at least one of the other victims was from the ANC, police said.

Police and peace monitors expected factional violence to flare in townships around Durban after the ANC march.

Natal and the enclaves of the KwaZulu black homeland within the province, heartland for South Africa's nine million Zulus, have seen some of the worst political violence of the past four years of apartheid reform. About 15,000 people have been killed there.

The ANC said the turnout for the march was a ringing confirmation that Zulus wanted to participate in the April 26-28 elections, in which the country's five-to-one black majority will vote for the first time.

President De Klerk met Mr. Buthelezi in Durban Saturday in a bid to convince him to allow electioneering for South Africa's first all-race poll next month, a spokesman for the ruling National Party said.

The spokesman would not give further details of the private meeting.

White House releases Clintons' tax records

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House released tax records aimed at painting President Bill Clinton as a distant actor in the Whitewater affair, as a grand jury called another presidential aide to testify about the Arkansas land deal.

White House Staff Secretary John Podesta was subpoenaed Friday to testify in the investigation of the Whitewater-Development Corp of Arkansas, which the Clintons once co-owned.

One source familiar with the Clinton's tax records was at pains Friday to distance the

Clintons from the inner workings of Whitewater.

"The Clintons did not manage the venture they did not operate it. They didn't have, keep its books and records. They didn't have ready access to it," the source told reporters at the White House, speaking on condition he not be named.

"They paid their interest as they were requested to do," the source said.

The Clintons have consistently said they lost money on the deal and paid proper interest on loans tied to it. Mr. Podesta is the 12th Clinton administration official to be called to testify in the probe.

The subpoena was announced just hours after the White House released tax returns for Mr. Clinton and his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, for the years 1977 through 1979, as well as a year-by-year list of the Clintons' payments to Whitewater.

The documents said the Clintons' Whitewater interest payments totalled \$46,635 over 12 years — \$22,000 less than the 69,000 in Whitewater losses that Mr. Clinton had earlier estimated.

Ukrainians see little hope in elections

KIEV (R) — Ukrainians disheartened by political deadlock and mass poverty go to the polls this weekend with few seeing any prospect of the election outcome producing any improvement.

President Leonid Kravchuk predicted the election would produce a "less than full-blooded parliament" and said he would seek additional powers to ensure order and proceed with the country's largely undeveloped reforms.

The first parliamentary election since Ukraine secured independence in 1991 was supposed to break a constitutional logjam, oust Communist hangers-on and spur reforms when it was called ahead of term last September.

The first round of the poll Sunday has instead generated little interest among voters baffled by an electoral system which could return a crippled parliament, leave more than a hundred seats unfilled and sow political chaos.

Kravchuk, making his third major television appearance in a week Friday, said that parliament, if unable to function, "will turn over its powers on the economy, corruption and fighting organised crime to the president."

The election could also widen the divide between the country's nationalist west and the pro-Russian east and south, which have less than a firm commitment to Ukrainian statehood.

Voters in the eastern Donbass coalfield and in Crimea, dominated by ethnic Russians, will probably return Communists and candidates calling for closer economic integration with Moscow.

They will also vote in separate plebiscites on restoring economic ties with Russia, boosting regional powers and establishing Russian as a state language alongside Ukrainian.

Parliamentary nationalists in western Ukraine could win several seats, filling a vacuum created by voter frustration and the lacklustre performance of 28 splintered political parties.

Economists say the vote is also unlikely to return a bloc of sharp-witted reformers capable of directing the market changes which lag far behind those in relatively prosperous Russia.

The campaign has been dull, with few posters in the streets, only a handful of rallies and no more than a few candidates known to the vast majority of voters.

"Given the conditions of social and economic discontent, many voters will probably reject all the candidates before them," said Alexander Vishnyak, head of Ukraine's Sociological Service.

Voters in the first round face half papers with up to 31 names. Opinion polls show only about 20 of 450 districts will elect a deputy in the first round by giving the leading candidate the required 50 per cent of votes cast.

A rule invalidating the vote in any constituency with a turnout of less than 50 per cent could leave many seats unfilled even after the second round.

Mexican rebels: Colosio murder prelude to attack

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (R) — Mayan rebels accused hardliners in Mexico's government Friday of being behind the assassination of ruling party presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio as part of a strategy to squash democratic reforms.

"The hardliners and the militarist option inside the government planned and brought to completion this provocation to end all the peaceful intent of democratisation of the country," the Zapatista National Liberation Army said in a communique from southern Mexico.

The communique was the first reaction from the rebels to the killing of Mr. Colosio, 44, who was shot in the head and abdomen Wednesday after a Tijuana campaign rally.

The Zapatistas said hardline factions within Mexico's ruling class were opposed to the reforms passed this week by the Mexican Congress that would clean up the country's elections and loosen the grip of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has ruled Mexico since 1929.

Also, they said the hardliners wanted to abandon efforts by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari to bring a peaceful end to the uprising in Chiapas, which was launched in the name of social justice and political empowerment of Mexico's indigenous people.

This same group, the rebels said, "is the one that ordered the assassination of (Colosio)... and now tries to top off its infamous action with break-

ing of the ceasefire and the restarting of the war," the communique said.

The rebels, who began their New Year's Day uprising by seizing several Chiapas cities, also said there were "clear signals" that the government was planning to move militarily to end the rebellion and accused the Mexican army of breaking a ceasefire that took effect on Jan. 17.

They said the Mexican army dropped four "incendiary devices" containing some kind of gas near a highway in rebel-held territory March 19 and said the army has been moving troops into the area in preparation for combat.

Mexico City newspapers recently reported an influx of troops into the conflict zone, but the army issued a statement this week saying that it was only rotating troops in and out of the area.

The rebels have been negotiating with peace envoy Manuel Camacho Solis since February to end the crisis. At least 145 people died in the early days of the uprising but fighting stopped when a Jan. 17 ceasefire took effect.

Mr. Colosio was buried Friday in his hometown in the northern state of Sonora.

Attorney General Diego Valadez said Thursday that Mario Aburto Martinez, 23, confessed to killing Mr. Colosio, but Mr. Aburto would not comment when reporters asked about his motive.

Aburto was transferred to a maximum security prison near Mexico City Thursday night.

Remaining troops rescued from Malaysian mountain

KOTA KINABALU, Malaysia (R) — A helicopter winched three soldiers to safety from a deep gully on South East Asia's highest mountain Saturday, completing a dramatic rescue of five soldiers lost for a month.

The three — Major Roland Foster, 54, of Britain and Chen Wai Keung, 24, and Cheung Yiu Keung, 32, non-commissioned officers in Hong Kong's Royal Logistic Corps — clambered out of the helicopter and checked into a local hospital.

Two others — Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Neil, 46, of Britain and private Lam Wai Ki, 27, of Hong Kong — were hoisted out Friday before darkness fell. They were in a hospital in Kota Kinabalu, capital of Malaysia's north Borneo state of Sabah, about 160 kilometres from Mount Kinabalu.

Foster told reporters on his way into the Sabah Medical Centre that he felt "very well". Asked what was the worst part of the ordeal, he said: "Just the wait. I think. We played chess, talked about house extensions, we talked about lots of things."

He said their rations were "getting towards the end a bit, but we were okay."

A doctor at the medical centre said they were down to eating one biscuit a day for the last two to three days before being rescued, but added they could have survived longer as they were near plenty of water.

The Malaysian helicopter pilot who first spotted the five said they had been trapped

between two waterfalls at the bottom of the gully at around 1,800 metres (6,000 feet).

"We spotted an S.O.S. sign made of stones on the bank of the Panatatan River and on closer inspection we saw the five, with two of them lying on the ground," Mohammad Izhar Haroun told reporters.

The five soldiers were part of a 10-man team which started a training expedition on Mount Kinabalu on Feb. 22.

The team split into two groups after reaching Mount Kinabalu's peak to begin a dangerous descent into Low's Gully, which plunges from the peak to waterfalls and rapids. It was not immediately clear why the group split up.

British Prime Minister John Major sent a personal message of thanks to Malaysian counterpart Mahathir Mohammad for the efforts of Malaysian troops.

An elite British air force team and hundreds of Malaysian soldiers and park rangers had searched the mountain for the past three weeks, a week after the soldiers failed to return on schedule from an adventure training expedition. Villagers near the foothills had left food along trails the soldiers might take on their way out of the dense jungle.

Diplomats and officials said Britain hoped the joint rescue effort could help warm ties between the two countries after Kuala Lumpur retaliated against British firms over corruption allegations in the British press.

Italy to elect a new political class

ROME (R) — Italy's 49.4 million voters pondered their options Saturday after a night of fiery oratory and sporadic violence as one of the bitterest election campaigns in the country's recent history came to an end.

Police reported several minor incidents after Friday night's closing rallies. In Milan a candidate for the federalist Northern League was attacked shortly before midnight by a gang wearing motorcycle helmets who clubbed him with baseball bats.

Maurilio Frigerio, who is standing for the Senate (upper house), was taken to hospital with cuts and bruises but later allowed to go home, his party said.

In Rome the ex-Communist Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) said a small firebomb exploded after being thrown at one of its local offices.

A PDS spokesman also said several of its supporters had come under attack by rightwingers as they were passing up election posters Friday night.

The attacks came shortly after President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro had appealed for Italians to pull together for the good of the country after the divisive campaign.

In a speech to Italy's successful Winter Olympic Games athletes he pointedly stressed the virtues of teamwork.

Yavlinsky, Nationalities Minister Sergei Shakhrai, and Economics Minister Alexander Shokhin.

The former U.S. President Richard Nixon cautioned against writing off Russian President Boris Yeltsin because of his increasingly erratic behaviour, saying he remains the best guarantor of Russian democracy.

Mr. Nixon, writing of his recent trip to Russia in the New York Times, noted an onset of pessimism and anti-American sentiment there and said "Russia's political scene can only be described as chaotic."

"President Yeltsin has lost much of the mystique from his historic role in the destruction of Soviet communism. He may be finding that history is against him. Over the centuries, revolutionary leaders have not been good nation-builders," Mr. Nixon wrote.

"But it would be premature to write Mr. Yeltsin off because of his frequent absences from Moscow and his increasingly erratic conduct," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin, he said, "is still the country's most popular politician — the best guarantor of Russian democracy and stability until his term expires in 1996."

"The U.S. should treat him with respect and work closely with him," Mr. Nixon added.

Mr. Nixon, who returned from Russia a week ago, also gave high marks to the new generation of Russian leaders, particularly economist Grigory

Yavlinsky, Nationalities Minister Sergei Shakhrai, and Economics Minister Alexander Shokhin.

The former U.S. president, who was snubbed by Mr. Yeltsin for meeting with hardline opposition leaders, described ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy as a "ruthless, shrewd, demagogue" but said he would not be elected president.

"He lacks the presence and conviction to lead a great nation," said Mr. Nixon. "For Hitler, anti-Semitism was a tactic; for Mr. Zhirinovskiy it is a tactic; a cynical attempt to exploit popular bases," he added.

Mr. Nixon referred to the "sea change in Russia's foreign policy" as the most disturbing development since the December elections in Russia.

Observing that Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev's rhetoric has shifted 180 degrees, he said the emphasis on a renewed Russian superpower role was a reaction to the December elections, in which ultra-nationalists made a strong showing.

On the issue of NATO's enlargement to include Eastern European countries, Mr. Nixon said, "Russia must not be given a veto over a NATO decision to expand."

Mr. Nixon also attached special importance to the independence of Ukraine, warning that "a Russian-Ukrainian confrontation would make

Bosnia look like a Sunday school picnic."

"Moscow should be made to understand that any attempt to destabilise Ukraine — to say nothing to outright aggression — would have devastating consequences for the Russian-American relationship," he wrote.

Meanwhile, President Yeltsin said in a newspaper interview published Saturday that close cooperation among former Soviet republics should not be reached at Russia's expense.

Mr. Yeltsin told the daily Izvestia that the defunct Soviet Union was far from perfect — because it had given too many privileges to non-Russian republics.

"They start to forget that today's independent states were long known as an underdeveloped hinterland," Mr. Yeltsin said. "We were even proud that they were so quick to get to the point when they could nearly overtake Russia."

"No-one mentioned at whose expense, though."

Mr. Yeltsin's decision in December 1991 to form the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) with Russia's Slav neighbours Ukraine and Belarus led directly to the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Of the 15 former Soviet republics, all except the three Baltic states are in the CIS but many of Mr. Yeltsin's domestic opponents want to return to a single state under Russian

leadership.

The republics' fears that hardline Russian nationalists or Communists would try to revive a post-Soviet empire were fanned by December election results. The poll gave empire-builders at both ends of the political spectrum a majority in parliament.

Even once-liberal mainstream politicians have since begun copying the hardliners' agendas and seeking a more assertive policy to Russia's neighbours.

"Russia diluted itself in the Soviet Union at its own expense," Mr. Yeltsin said. "I am sure such a model has exhausted its resources and no return to it is possible."

But Mr. Yeltsin, who was interviewed by telephone by Izvestia during a holiday by the Black Sea, said that he did favour closer cooperation between the countries which emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Asked whether Russia wanted a stronger alliance of former Soviet states, he answered:

"I want the question to be put another way: Is the complete disintegration of the former Soviet Union possible at all?"

"It is impossible, because it would lead to a sharp drop in survival chances for every separate republic," he added. "We should find an optimal, painless... form of joint existence."

Hong Kong firm to build world's tallest building

HONG KONG (AP) — A Hong Kong property firm plans to build the world's tallest building as a sign of confidence in the colony's future after China resumes sovereignty in 1997, the firm's chairman said Saturday. Nina Wang, head of Chimachem Group, said the 1,544-foot (468-metre) office building to be completed in 1998 would be named "Nina Wang" after her. Work on the skyscraper, which will cost about 10 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$1.28 billion), has already begun close to Hong Kong's new airport planned for completion around 1997. "Anyone coming in and out of Hong Kong will see it," Ms. Wang said in an interview. The building will eclipse the 1,454-foot (436-metre) Sears Tower in Chicago, currently the world's tallest building. It will also surpass the planned 1,508-foot (457-metre) Chongqing Tower in Chongqing, southwest China, and the 1,485-foot (450-metre) Petronas Tower under construction in Kuala Lumpur, the company said.

Early Turner paintings turn up in British attic

LONDON (R) — Two early watercolours depicting Stonehenge and the Pyramids by 19th century British painter J.M.W. Turner have turned up after lying for years in an attic, the Daily Telegraph reported Saturday. The pictures, to be auctioned in London in May, were painted in 1822 for one of Turner's most important patrons, amateur antiquarian Walter Fawkes. Fawkes was a descendant of Guy Fawkes who tried to blow up parliament in the failed "gunpowder plot" on Nov. 5, 1605.

Although created down the centre and highly inaccurate, the pictures are very detailed, the Daily Telegraph said. "It's quite funny really. Turner simply rearranged reality to suit his needs. He had never been to Egypt," said Nigel Kirk of auctioneers Mellors and Kirk in Nottingham, northern England. He said an elderly woman brought the watercolours to him last year.

Her family had acquired them in 1940 and records show they were last sold in 1890. "They are absolutely genuine and have value as curiosities," said Ian Warrell of London's Tate Gallery that owns most of Turner's work. The pictures are expected to fetch tens of thousands of sterling when they are auctioned on May 26.

Police impound cyclist's wheels

COLOMBUS, Ohio (AFP) — A 30-year-old cyclist found himself without wheels when police decided he was drunk and confiscated his bicycle under a new state law. Ronald Benchert, who has already been convicted three times for drunken driving, lost control of his bicycle as he rode to an alcoholic anonymous meeting and swerved into an oncoming car. He refused to take a sobriety test and police charged him with drunken driving and impounded his bike. Under the new law cyclists are considered the same as motorists. Mr. Benchert got his bike back in time to ride to court on Monday.

Tyson falls test

INDIANAPOLIS (R) — Former heavyweight boxing champ Mike Tyson has received some bad news going into his third year in jail: He failed a test that would have won him a high school diploma and shaved time off his sentence. Phil Slavens, assistant director of the Indiana Youth Centre, said Friday that Tyson would get another chance to try the test in three months. More than a diploma is at stake. If he passes the test Tyson could get three months cut from his prison sentence when the date for his parole rolls around a year from now. "He will remain in school and work on the areas in which he was deficient," Mr. Slavens said. He said Tyson got the bad news Thursday. It was two years ago Saturday that Tyson, 27, was jailed after being convicted of rape. By some accounts in the time since, he has become an introspective convert to Islam, vastly different from the swaggering celebrity who thought, along with his lawyers, that an appeal would free him shortly after he was sentenced. But rather than riding out appeals in the comfort of his Ohio mansion, Tyson has been confined to the youth centre along with 1,200 other inmates whose crimes include murder. And in jail he has lost one appeal after another.

Dominique returns to Atlanta to beat Hawks

ATLANTA (R) — Revenge was sweet for Dominique Wilkins Friday.

Wilkins, star forward for the Hawks for his entire career before being dealt to the lowly Clippers last month, returned to Atlanta for the first time and poured in 36 points to lead Los Angeles to a 97-94 victory over his former club.

Known as "the human highlight film" for his dazzling moves, Wilkins scored 10 of his 36 in the fourth quarter, including the basket that gave the Clippers the lead for good at 93-92.

Wilkins, upser at being traded from serious contenders for whom he had starred for years to the struggling Clippers, also had 10 rebounds despite playing with the flu.

The loss dropped Atlanta into second place in the Eastern Conference playoff race, one game behind New York.

At Indiana, Patrick Ewing had 25 points and 15 rebounds to lead the streaking New York Knicks to their 12th win in a row as they edged the Pacers 85-82.

The Knicks, who claimed sole possession of first place in the Eastern Conference, are in the midst of their second longest winning streak in club history, surpassed only by an 18-game streak during their 1969-70 championship season.

A three-pointer by Reggie Miller pulled Indiana to within one at 83-82 with 16 seconds left.

The Knicks held on as Anthony Maso sank two foul shots and Byron Scott missed a three-pointer for Indiana in the closing seconds.

At New Jersey, the Nets ended a 12-game losing streak against Chicago by crushing the Bulls 110-87.

Johnny Newman had 22 points and the Nets outscored Chicago from the foul line 34-12 as New Jersey posted its first victory over the NBA champions in more than three years.

In Philadelphia, John Williams scored 16 of his 18 points in the first half as the Cleveland Cavaliers rolled over the slumping 76ers 105-88.

Cleveland opened a 19-point halftime lead and widened it to 75-44 with 5:05 left in the third quarter. The Sixers got no closer than 13 points in losing their ninth straight home game.

The Cavs have defeated the 76ers 13 consecutive times. At Detroit, Larry Johnson, Frank Brickowski and Muggsy Bogues scored 18 points apiece to lead the Charlotte Hornets to a 106-92 victory over the Pistons.

The Hornets led by 15 points at halftime and opened a 24-point advantage late in the third quarter.

Isiah Thomas scored 19 points and Lindsey Hunter added 15 for the Pistons, who are 0-3 against Charlotte this season.

At Utah, Karl Malone scored 27 points and John Stockton added 24 points and 14 assists as the Jazz snapped a five-game losing streak with a 103-96 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks.

In Phoenix, Dan Majerle and Kevin Johnson scored six points each in a late 13-2 run as the Suns escaped with a 99-94 victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

In Portland, Clyde Drexler scored 23 points and Harvey Grant scored six during an early 17-4 run that lifted the Trail Blazers to a 100-91 victory over the Sacramento Kings.

Jordan soccer championship brings lots of surprises

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — With only four weeks left in the first division soccer championship, the 18th week of the tournament provided fans with a series of surprising results that might well determine the fate of the 12 team competition.

Although the top three positions remained unchanged, the last four teams are now undoubtedly in an unenviable position. With four matches each against top teams, Al Jazireh and Fuhais will have to score some wins and hope that Al Arabi and Al Baqaa lose so that they can maintain their spots among first division teams. Meanwhile, Sahab and Al Yarmouk in 11th and 12th place are very close to relegation and will have some tough opponents in Al Ahli and Al Hussein in upcoming matches.

During the past week, Al Baqaa delighted their fans by scoring an unexpected 2-0 win over Al Hussein. Al Baqaa's players were reportedly awarded JD 1000 by the club and promised of similar bonuses if they scored more wins.

With the victory, Al Baqaa remained in 7th place, while Al Hussein are fourth. Titleholders Al Faisali again failed to give their fans something to cheer about when they were held to a 1-1 draw with 9th placed Al Jazireh.

Although Al Faisali have almost clinched the title, their fans and coaching staff must surely be very upset after their

results during the past two weeks, especially their 1-0 defeat to Al Hussein — their first loss of the season.

Al Ahli remained in 3rd place after crushing last placed Al Yarmouk 5-0. The win was an important one for Al Ahli who last week surprisingly lost 2-1 to Al Jazireh and were held to a goalless draw with Al Baqaa.

Al Yarmouk seemed helpless as Al Ahli carried out an all out attack from the outset of the match held at Al Maftaq Stadium.

Strikers Amer Wali, Imad Fatafah and Nari Yadaaj scored for Al Ahli in the 18th, 31st and 42nd minutes ending the first half with a commanding 3-0 lead.

Khalil Fatafah took advantage of a fragmented defence and netted in the fourth goal in the 65th minute.

Wali was assisted by Husam Hammash in scoring his second and Al Ahli's fifth goal in the 88th minute while Al Yarmouk lost two scoring chances.

In another match, Al Fuhais overcame Sahab 2-1 but remained in 10th place while Sahab's overall points were frozen at 17 and thus stayed in 11th place.

Sahab seemed to have the upper hand throughout the first half and closely guarded Fuhais strikers Wa'ed Suweis and Khader Mubarak.

Suweis' efforts paid off as he scored his first goal from a header in the 70th minute and then stunned Sahab when he added another goal in the 81st minute.

Two minutes later, Sahab's ace Mohammed Al Ashhab was tackled and Mohammed Huneidi scored from a penalty shot ending the match with an important win for Al Fuhais.

Al Ramtha dropped from 4th to 6th place after their 3-1 fall to former champions Al Wihdat.

As both teams went on an early offensive trying to score in the first half, Al Ramtha's Mouaffaq Abu Hdeib was tackled in the box warranting a penalty shot, which was dis-

puted by Al Wihdat's officials and bench before it was successfully executed by Khaled Al Akqouri in the 31st minute.

As Al Wihdat repeatedly tried to score the equaliser, they were infuriated when the referee awarded Al Ramtha another penalty shot.

However, goalie Naser Al Ghandour averted another goal when he successfully blocked Abu Hdeib's second try.

Al Wihdat began their scoring spree late in the second half and managed to score three goals within seven minutes to maintain second place for now.

The most goals were scored in the Qadissieh-Arabi match which ended 3-0 with Al Qadissieh to maintain their unbeaten record during the second leg of the competition.

They thus moved from 6th to 5th place, while Al Arabi remained in 8th place.

Al Arabi played one of their best matches early in the first half when repeated attacks finally paid off as Raed Aziz opened scoring in the fifth minute. However, Al Qadissieh's Ra'ed Al Momani equalised six minutes later.

Al Arabi's striker Ayman Al Omari and Mohammed Alawneh scored two minutes apart to give their team a 3-1 lead before Al Qadissieh's Mustafa Adam scored his team's second goal from a penalty in the 40th minute ending the first half 3-2 for Al Arabi.

Al Qadissieh took control of the second half and managed to equalise by Tamer Ibrahim in the 75th minute.

Al Arabi's brilliant striker Al Omari lost the chance to give his team the win when a definite chance was blocked by Al Qadissieh's veteran goalie Khaled Abdul Fatah.

In the upcoming 19th week of the competition, Al Fuhais take on Al Wihdat, Al Qadissieh meet Al Jazireh, Al Ahli face Sahab, Al Ramtha meet Al Arabi, Al Faisali play Al Baqaa, Al Yarmouk take on Al Hussein, and Al Jazireh meet Al Hussein in a postponed match.

STANDINGS AFTER 18th WEEK

Team	P	W	D	GD	L	GF	GA	Pts
Fuhais	18	13	2	2	1	39	10	45
Wihdat	18	8	4	2	4	20	16	34
Arabi	18	8	4	1	5	28	17	33
Hussein	17	7	4	2	4	23	15	31
Qadissieh	18	6	5	3	4	27	20	31
Ramtha	18	8	2	1	7	29	24	29
Baqaa	18	7	2	2	7	18	25	27
Arabi	18	4	6	—	8	23	35	24
Jazireh	17	3	7	—	7	20	23	23
Fuhais	18	6	1	1	10	16	30	21
Sahab	18	3	3	2	10	16	26	17
Yarmouk	18	5	—	2	11	18	36	17

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Sato wins women's World Figure Skating Championship

CHIBA, Japan (AP) — With almost flawless precision, Japan's Yuko Sato won the women's World Figure Skating Championship Saturday.

It was the first major international victory for Sato, who used her trademark footwork and hit all of her jumps to skate by Surya Bonaly of France, who took the silver medal.

Finishing third was Germany's Tanja Szewczenko.

Sato is the first Japanese to win a world figure skating championship since Midori Ito won in 1989, and her performance was welcomed by the Japanese crowd with a rain of bouquets and thunderous applause.

For Bonaly, who cried and took off her medal as she stood on the winners' stand, it was a bitter loss.

Sato's victory Saturday was by a close margin. Her scores ranged from 5.7 to 5.9, while Bonaly's were from 5.5 to 5.9.

Five of the nine judges scored Sato as first, compared with four for Bonaly. One judge, however, had Bonaly at third after Szewczenko.

Bonaly, who was also runner-up in last year's world championships, finished a very close second in the shorter technical programme to Sato Friday. Each won four first-place votes.

Both landed clean triple lutz-double toe loop combinations in the technicals, prompting Bonaly's coach, Alain Giletti, to suggest Bonaly might try a quadruple — four in-air revolutions — to get the edge in Saturday's free programme.

No woman has ever landed a quad successfully in competition. On Saturday, Bonaly did not try, though she did hit a triple flip-triple toe combination.

She touched her hand to the ice after a triple loop late in her routine, however, that cost her points.



Yuko Sato of Japan (AFP photo)

This year's women's championship was contested without any of the medal winners from the Olympics.

Lillehammer gold medalist Oksana Baiul of Ukraine did not compete because she injured her leg in practice at the Olympics, and silver medalist Nancy Kerrigan of the United States stayed home resting.

The only Lillehammer medalist who made it to Japan, bronze winner Chen Lu of China, pulled out Thursday after announcing she had

aggravated a stress fracture in her right foot.

All the no-shows made the women's event ripe for skaters like Sato and Bonaly, who had yet to win a world championship title or an Olympic medal.

Bonaly, who defeated 1993 world champion Baiul for her fourth European championship just two months ago, finished a disappointing fourth at Lillehammer after making several mistakes in her free programme.

U.S. take Davis Cup lead over India

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — The United States, beaten in the first round of the Davis Cup in 1993, overcame their first hurdle of this year's competition when Patrick McEnroe and Richey Reneberg won a tight doubles against India's Leander Paes and Gaurav Natarajan.

Their 7-6 6-4, 2-6 7-6 victory gave the Americans a winning 3-0 lead in the world group first round tie Saturday. But it could have been a Saturday story had the young Indian pair not crumpled at crucial moments in the opening two sets.

Spurred on by a noisy crowd, Paes and Natarajan came good in the third set as the debutant Natarajan scarcely put a foot wrong.

The fourth set had the Delhi stadium rocking as game after game went to deuce. Paes, the more spectacular but erratic of the Indian pair, looked set to crack in the ninth game as the Americans held successive break points.

Natarajan pulled him out of trouble with two scintillating volleys and the game went to a tie-break. In the end it was Natarajan who made the vital

error, failing to get to a slashing backhand cross-court service return from Reneberg to give the Americans the only break they needed.

In Colombo, Sri Lanka took an unassailable 3-0 lead by winning the doubles against Saudi Arabia on the second day of their Davis Cup relegation tie in the Asia-Oceania Zone group 11 Saturday.

Sri Lanka's Jayantha Wijesekera and Rohan de Silva combined well to overcome the Saudi pair to Zulfiqar Ahmad and Tawfik Ibrahim, 7-5, 6-3, 6-2.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHI
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NONE BUT THE BRAVE
Both vulnerable. North deals.
NORTH
♠ K 9 4
♥ A 3 9 8
♦ Q 7 5
♣ A 7 5
EAST
♠ 7 3
♥ K 10 2
♦ Q 9 10 5
♣ A 7 5
SOUTH
♠ A Q 10 6 5 2
♥ 7 5 3
♦ K 6
♣ 6 4
The bidding:
North East South West
1♠ Pass 1♠ Pass
2♠ Pass 3♠ Pass
4♠ Pass Pass Pass
Opening lead: Queen of ♠
The key to most hands is counting. When you find that, given time, declarer has enough tricks to make the contract, desperate measures might be called for to snatch victory.
Because of the weak doubleton, North should not hesitate missing partner's spades with only three-card support. South's hand revealed to near opening-bid strength, so the invitational three-spade bid was fully warranted. North's boost to

game was automatic.
West led the queen of diamonds and East rose with the ace — after all, king here has been known to be singleton. When the monarch did not appear, it was time to review the situation.
Obviously, there were no more diamond tricks that the defenders and, at most, one club trick. If West held the ace of clubs, then declarer, in addition to the king of diamonds, certainly had to have the ace-queen of spades or queen-jack of spades and queen of hearts to make a game try. What's the best chance for the defense to emerge triumphant?
When a defender needs to find tricks, it is usually right to play pursue for the weakest holding that will produce those tricks. That combination was the queen of hearts and ace of clubs. Since declarer would be able to take discards on clubs once the ace was forced out, it was vital to attack hearts immediately.
Matching the deal to a low heart into dummy's strength. Declarer captured West's queen with the ace, drew trumps and started on clubs, but West hopped up with the ace to return a heart. That nettled the defenders two heart tricks and a one-trick set.

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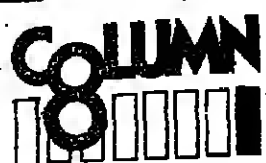
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	PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD	AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
T O D A Y	INDECENT PROPOSAL Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Holly Floria & Alicia Anne in BIKINI ISLAND Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD '1' DEMOLITION MAN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' ACCIDENTAL HERO Shows: 12:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:15	Opening Soon A political comedy Forbidden X Forbidden	Watch for the surprise — The next play....	Since the actors are abroad the theatre is closed It will re-open on April 6, 1994 for two weeks in the last performances of: "Arab Summit Conference"



Slatkin to head U.S. orchestra

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Leonard Slatkin, conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, is to succeed Mstislav Rostropovich at the head of the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO), the Washington Post reported Saturday. The Washington-based NSO would not comment on the report, but a press conference has been arranged for Monday at its Kennedy Centre headquarters. The Washington Post said Slatkin, 49, considered with Lorin Maazel as one of the two best conductors in the United States, had been in the wind for months. Slatkin's contract with the St. Louis Orchestra would normally expire in 1996, while Rostropovich, 67 Sunday, announced in 1992 that he would retire at the end of the current season. Slatkin would be the fifth conductor of the NSO, after Hans Kindler (1931-1949), Howard Mitchell (1949-1969), Antal Dorati (1970-1977) and Rostropovich. He is considered responsible for achieving international renown for the St. Louis Orchestra, which he has headed since 1979, and of gaining a television audience for classical music. Slatkin is also known for his interpretations of contemporary American music and his knowledge of the Russian repertoire that has become a specialty of the NSO in recent years under Rostropovich.

Dudley Moore's lawyer reports no crime committed

LOS ANGELES (R) — British actor Dudley Moore's arrest this week stemmed from a "lover's quarrel" in which his long-time girlfriend falsely accused him of beating her, Moore's lawyer said late Friday. Attorney Allan Siegel said Moore "never laid a hand on the woman" and that the couple had reconciled and were back together. "She told police it was all a misunderstanding," he told Reuters. The 58-year-old comic actor, star of such hit films as *Arthur* and *10*, was arrested at his exclusive Venice Beach home Monday night after his girlfriend, Nicole Rothchild, accused him of striking her. He was released on \$50,000 bail. Mr. Siegel said a "disagreement" began when Ms. Rothchild, 30, who has had an on-again, off-again relationship with Moore for the past 12 years, arrived at his home drunk and uninvited. "They had a lover's quarrel," he said. When she refused to leave, Moore called an emergency operator and asked for police to remove her from his home. Mr. Siegel said, "In a counter-move, she called the operator herself and made up a story about him striking her." Mr. Siegel said police had no choice but to arrest Moore in accordance with laws covering domestic violence. But when officers later found Ms. Rothchild at her own apartment, she told them it was all a mistake and that she had no reason to press charges. Mr. Siegel said. But investigators noticed a red mark on her neck — a scar from recent thyroid surgery — and mistakenly believed it was an injury suffered at Moore's hands, the lawyer said. Over her protests, police required her to go to a local hospital, but no treatment was needed, Mr. Siegel said. Mr. Siegel said he was confident that prosecutors will drop the case. The city attorney's office has been considering whether to charge Moore with a misdemeanor that carries a maximum penalty of six months in prison.

White House staffers take drug tests

WASHINGTON (AFP) — All White House personnel were required to take a drug test, a White House staffer said. In testimony before a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee, Patricia Thomason, director of the White House Office of Administration, said that even the president's new counsel — the highly respected Lloyd Cutler — underwent the drug test. All newly hired staffers were tested for illegal drugs, which are also given randomly to all permanent White House workers, Ms. Thomason said. One White House employee hired before Mr. Clinton came into office tested positive.

Jordan expects Paris Club talks in May

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan expects to hold debt rescheduling talks with the Paris Club of creditor governments in early May after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) issues a certification that the Kingdom has met with stipulations in the economic restructuring programmes it launched several years ago, a senior official said Saturday. The official, a key figure in the Kingdom's efforts to address its \$6.6 billion foreign debt, dismissed as untrue a report that the government had received an IMF warning that it was deviating from the agreements it has undertaken in the economic restructuring programmes.

"I am not aware of any such communication from the IMF or anyone else," said the official, who preferred anonymity.

"We are waiting for the IMF executive directors to issue the certification so that we could open the negotiations with the Paris Club," the official told the Jordan Times. "We don't anticipate any problem with securing the IMF certification," added the official, noting that an IMF delegation visited Amman in February for a review of the economic programme. "The mission's report would be submitted to the executive directors soon, and once it is approved, which is more or less routine, the certification will be issued," said another official. "We do not have any indications to the contrary," added the official, conceding, however, that the negotiations with the Paris Club were delayed because of the delay in implementation of some of the measures agreed with the IMF.

Foremost among those measures is the introduction of a sales tax which has been in force since 1992. Under a standby agreement signed with the IMF early this year Jordan undertook to introduce the levy in the first quarter of 1994. A draft law on sales tax was sent to Parliament in February, but the legislation was not debated on the floor before Parliament recessed after a regular session last week. The legislature is expected to begin an extraordinary session next month to consider pending legislation, including the draft sales tax law. The Financial Committee of the Lower House of Parliament has recommended that the draft law be endorsed after amendments. Political activists and union leaders, supported by business-

men, have launched a campaign against sales tax. The Islamic Action Front (IAF), Jordan's mainstream Islamic movement which rejects the IMF-prescribed economic programme altogether, boycotted the last session of Parliament to protest the House's Financial Committee's recommendation that the law on sales tax be endorsed. Clear the way for the Kingdom's negotiations with the creditor governments. According to Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) figures, Jordan's total foreign loans stood at JD 4,803.9 million at the end of 1993. This figure included JD 381.4 million owed to Arab governments and funds, JD 2,821.5 million to industrial countries' governments and state-run agencies, JD 15.9 million to other governments, JD 154.4 million to foreign banks (after a rescheduling accord last year which cut down the amount involved), JD 28.5 million to foreign companies, JD 926.6 million to multilateral agencies, JD 174.1 million in bonds and JD 301.5 million in leasing contracts. The amount on the negotiating table with the Paris Club is expected to be nearly JD 750 million.

Islamists regain almost total control of agriculture engineers

By Mariam Shabin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Islamists regained almost total control of Jordan's Agricultural Engineering Association after having shared power with more secular groups for the last four years, results of association elections showed Saturday. Seven of the committee's nine seats, including the seat for president and vice-president, were won by Islamists, while two members of the Baath Arab Socialist Party, the Democratic Party for Progress in Jordan and the Jordanian Socialist Democratic Party. The Professional Bloc was composed mostly of independent liberals.

"Politics has always been a big part of union politics, but now that we have a parliament and political parties we can afford to stick to the professional aspects of agriculture and get better terms of work for those working in agriculture in Jordan," Mohammad Abu Ayyash, the outgoing vice-president of the association, told the Jordan Times. Just over half of the association's members are registered voters, having paid association fees. Two thirds of the registered voters normally vote in association elections. Association officials say that the plight of the agriculture

community due to strains on the Jordanian economy after the Gulf war has made their lot worse over the last four years and that fears of the economic agreements related to the Arab-Israeli peace talks have put a further dent into the expectations for better times for agriculturalists. "We need an association which will protect the agriculture sector and allow us to grow competitive goods at competitive prices and allow for a fair chance to get our goods on Arab and European markets," said a leftist candidate. But most association observers believe that the reason for the overwhelming Islamist victory resulted from the division between the more secular groupings in the union than the strength of the Islamists. The Islamists controlled the union from 1984 to 1990. The Greens won an overwhelming victory in 1990. The new executive committee members of the association are: Tarek Al Tel (White — President); Hassan Jaher (White — Vice-president); Rami Tarawneh (Green); Mazen Abdul Qader (Green); Walid Arahayit, Mohamed Hababneh, Abdul Hadi Fellab, Hassan Ziadneh and Mohammad Bibas (all of them White).

Renewed Kabul rocketing kills 20

KABUL (Agencies) — At least 20 people were killed and 150 wounded as scores of rockets pounded Kabul, including one that hit mourners Saturday as they prepared to bury a war victim.

"It's the most rockets we have heard in weeks," said Dr. Nasser Sahak of the Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital, which provided the casualty count. The latest outbreak of fighting between President Burhanuddin Rabbani's forces and his rivals began Friday evening and lasted throughout the day Saturday. Most of those killed were hit in two attacks, hospital workers and witnesses said. The first came Friday when a rocket slammed into a main market in the centre of town, killing six people as they were buying fruits and vegetables. As mourners gathered Saturday at the home of one of the victims, a rocket crashed into the dwelling, killing nine. Also, the president's fighter jets bombed the Bala Hissar Fort on the southeastern edge of the city, which is controlled by warlord Rashid Dostum. There was no immediate word on casualties. General Dostum and renegade Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar launched a major offensive Jan. 1 in a bid to oust the president. They have not been able to drive the president's forces out of strategic sites in the capital, but they have maintained a relentless artillery barrage. More than 1,100 people have been killed, some 15,000 have been wounded and much of Kabul has been reduced to rubble. "All of these leaders bring fighting to Kabul," said Hajira Zia, a relative of one of the victims at Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital. "Why do they kill civilians. We are all refugees." "I scraped up bits of human flesh into plastic bags. Why can't somebody stop this senseless fighting," pleaded a man who survived the latest rocket attack.

One rocket exploded in the trees of the compound of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), causing the early closure of the main delegation offices, local employees reported. Reflecting the bitterness of many Kabul residents, one man asked why the United Nations could not intervene in Afghanistan as it has done in Somalia and Bosnia. Meanwhile, about 200 kilometres north of Kabul, pro-Rabbani forces were reportedly besieging an army base at Kalagay, where the rival forces of Gen. Dostum are dug in with the Islamic religious sect troops of Sayyad Jaffer Naderi. Kelagay, a former Red Army munitions depot during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, guards access to Mr. Naderi's Pule-Khumri headquarters, which in turn sits on a strategic crossroads of highways leading to northeast and northwest Afghanistan. In a separate development, suspected fundamentalists torched a train station in the western town of Boukadir and two car parks overnight Friday, security services said here Saturday. The station's waiting room was wrecked, while seven vehicles were destroyed in the other two fires, the same sources said. Meanwhile in Rahat, the head of the Socialist Forces Front Party (SFF), called on the international community to intervene to help end the violence. In an interview with the progressive Al Itihad Al Ishraqi newspaper, Hocine Ait Ahmad accused the West of "silence".

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators say they have agreed on roughly 8,000 policemen in Gaza and Jericho, although the PLO wants more. The PLO also says it is still short of the \$47 million start-up costs and \$90 million annual budget it needs to run a force this size. But whatever the uncertainties, the signs are they are coming soon. In the last few days, the Israeli army has shown signs of rolling back 27 years of occupation, pulling out of built-up areas in Gaza, pulling down observation towers and shifting offices to the border with Israel. "If the talks go well, the police force will start gradually entering Gaza and Jericho on April 7," said a PLO official. He declined to say how many would arrive then. A senior U.S. official said on Friday a "vanguard" of the police could start operating in the Gaza Strip and Jericho within a week. The building on Gaza beach is the only tangible sign of preparation by the Palestinian police, which will include many former PLO guerrillas. But

Gaza prepares to receive police force

By Wafa Amr
Reuters

GAZA — On Gaza beach, workers toil all day to finish redecorating an old building which will become the headquarters of the vanguard Palestinian police force. The building, with pill-boxes the shape of the Al Aqsa Mosque dome, will open for business on Sunday, Palestinian police officers said. A few Gazans wandered past curiously and one went up to ask an officer what was going on. Few details have emerged of the Palestinian police force, a key element in the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) peace deal with Israel. Commanders stay out of the limelight and, when they talk at all, say that everything still depends on talks in Cairo and elsewhere. "There is a detailed deployment plan ready to be implemented. The police force is prepared to take over in every location evacuated by the Israelis," said Farouq Amin, head of the PLO's security apparatus in the West Bank. "We're on the verge of taking over," he added. A delegation of senior officers arrived in Gaza from Cairo five months ago and there are rumours that the first batch of recruits from Gaza, who have been training in Egypt, will return to the strip on Sunday. Palestinians living under Israeli occupation for 27 years loathe and despise police centres, army patrols, checkpoints and most other signs of authority. Now officers are hoping they will learn to live with a friendly force. "They hate the Israelis but we will be different with them. They are our people. We will not repress them," said one officer. At least in the beginning, officers say they will use many of the same locations as the Israelis. Palestinian police will take over sites in Gaza City's Rimal and Shajia districts and the Ansar El prison will become a police training centre. Officers said PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat wanted the 300 or so officers who served under Israeli command and resigned in 1988, during the Palestinian uprising, to join the Palestinian police and add much-needed experience to the raw force. A delegations of ex-officers from the occupied territories is due to visit Tunis to meet him next week. The United States will provide 200 trucks and other vehicles for the Palestinian police in Gaza and Jericho, Michael McCurry, the State Department spokesman, said. The Palestinian police force would be partially financed by the international community.

Algeria media stage protest blackout

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerian print and broadcast media outlets observed a blackout Saturday in protest at an attack last week by suspected Islamic fundamentalists on an Algiers daily, amid reports the raid had claimed its third life.

No Algerian newspapers were to be published Saturday or Sunday as a gesture of protest and solidarity with the victims of Monday's attack on L'Hebdo Libere, in which armed men burst into the newspaper's head office disguised as policemen. The Algerian APS agency shut down its wires Saturday between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. (1200 to 1500 GMT) and ran only a minimal service from then until midnight. And the state television service observed a blackout Saturday from midday, the usual starting time for its transmissions, until 1:00 p.m., when it introduced a news programme with a black mourning ribbon across the top left corner of the screen bearing the inscription

"no to terrorism" in Arabic. APS added in a statement that its staff "fully support the declaration by editors of the national press and join them to forcefully condemn terrorism and barbarism." "Terrorism" is an Algerian media codeword for attacks carried out in the name of the fundamentalist insurgency which has wracked Algeria for the last two years. Meanwhile, Nadir Mahmoudi, who was critically hurt in Monday's attack, died of his wounds Thursday. L'Hebdo Libere said Saturday. Mahmoudi, who was not a journalist, was visiting his brother, newspaper director Abdul Rahman Mahmoudi, when the attack took place. Seven men armed with pistols entered the office in central Algiers claiming to be policemen, forcing the five people on the premises to lie down flat in the newsroom and shooting each through the head before fleeing. Photographer Madjif Yacef

and a company driver died instantly. The two others are still recovering from their wounds. Twelve journalists have been killed in Algeria by suspected fundamentalists over the last year. In a separate development, suspected fundamentalists torched a train station in the western town of Boukadir and two car parks overnight Friday, security services said here Saturday. The station's waiting room was wrecked, while seven vehicles were destroyed in the other two fires, the same sources said. Meanwhile in Rahat, the head of the Socialist Forces Front Party (SFF), called on the international community to intervene to help end the violence. In an interview with the progressive Al Itihad Al Ishraqi newspaper, Hocine Ait Ahmad accused the West of "silence".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Arabs appeal for Yemeni reconciliation

CAIRO (R) — Arab foreign ministers, in an unusual intervention in an internal conflict in a member state, called on Yemeni leaders on Saturday to settle their differences and hold the country together. Yemeni northern and southern politicians, led by President Ali Abdullah Saleh in the north and Vice President Ali Salem Al Beidh, have been at odds since last year over the course of the unification process which began in 1990. The Arab League council of ministers, meeting in Cairo for a regular six-month session, said in a statement: "The council affirms its extreme concern and anxiety at the developments urges way in the Yemeni arena and under Yemeni political leaders to double their efforts to solve the disputes in a way which would reinforce unity. The council considers unity in Yemen a national gain and a pan-Arab achievement which should be preserved and supported." The Arab League usually refrains from commenting on the internal affairs of member states.

U.N. inspector: Iraq trip successful

BAGHDAD (R) — A U.N. chemical inspection team left Baghdad on Saturday saying it had successfully completed its monitoring mission at a site where prohibited deadly gases had been destroyed. "The purpose was to obtain environmental samples, air samples. We've completed our work, the mission was successful," team leader Gerald Brubaker said before leaving Baghdad. "We took samples at different locations around the Muthanna site. It was a part of long-term monitoring under (U.N.) Resolution 715," he told reporters.

Militants not a threat to Mubarak — Rabin

TEL AVIV (R) — Muslim militants are unlikely to overthrow Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and turn the country into an Iranian-style Islamic republic, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Saturday. "I believe in the stability of President Mubarak's regime, which benefits from the support of the large majority of the Egyptian people faced with Islamic extremists," Mr. Rabin told Israeli radio. "I do not think Egypt is in danger of becoming another Iran with a Muslim extremist regime," Mr. Rabin said, adding that he was "sure" Egypt would continue to play an active role in the Arab-Israeli peace process. Mr. Rabin said he spoke to Mr. Mubarak by telephone Friday, the 15th anniversary of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty (see page 2). "I thanked President Mubarak for these 15 years of peace and he said the treaty was a perfect example of the way peace can be built. He also said he hoped other Arab countries would successfully follow the same path," Mr. Rabin said.

Iraq will only give Kurds autonomy

NICOSIA (AFP) — The government of President Saddam Hussein has ruled out extending self-rule to Iraqi Kurds beyond the autonomy they have already been granted, Iraqi Parliamentary Speaker Mahdi Saleh said Friday. Kurds were given autonomy in three northern provinces in 1970, he said in an interview on the Arabic service of Radio Monte-Carlo. Iraqi Kurds enjoyed the right to autonomy earlier than Kurds living in Turkey, Syria and Iran, he added. He also denied reports of confrontations in the Iraqi south, said to be organised by Shi'ite rebels. "The situation in the south is like in Baghdad, security is total," he said.

India likely to try 14 for Kashmir massacre

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The Indian government is likely to court martial 14 officers and soldiers for killing at least 31 unarmed Muslims last October in the northern state of Kashmir, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said Saturday. The federal home ministry was contemplating the action against four officers and 10 lower-rank troops of the Border Security Force (BSF) for the Oct. 22 massacre in Kashmir's Bijnbehara town, PTI quoted BSF officials as saying. More than 100 people were shot by soldiers of the paramilitary force, which opened fire on a crowd of 3,000 protesters on a street. The official death toll was 31, but survivors say 42 died and many were maimed and wounded.

Egyptians in Denmark suspects in U.S. case

COPENHAGEN (R) — Two Egyptians are being held in Denmark on suspicion of having links with the conspiracy behind the 1993 World Trade Center bombing in New York and a related bomb plot case, a Danish newspaper reported on Saturday. Provincial daily Aarhus Stiftstidende said the two asylum seekers had been in custody for four months in Aarhus, the main town on the Jutland peninsula, while Danish security police and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation secretly investigated their possible involvement in the plots. Danish security police were unavailable for comment on the report. The two men, who were not named but were said to be 30 and 36 years old respectively, were under suspicion mainly because a fingerprint from one of them matched a print found during U.S. police investigations of suspected Arab guerrillas in New York.

Bhutto exonerated in power abuse case

LAHORE (AFP) — Pakistani Premier Benazir Bhutto was cleared Saturday by a special court in a fourth case involving charges of abuse of power during her previous term in office. The one-judge court headed by Justice Munir Sheikh of the Lahore high court ruled the charge that Ms. Bhutto misused three air force planes for political purposes in 1989 had no substance, court sources said. The cases were filed against Ms. Bhutto by the then-President Ghulam Ishaq Khan after sacking her government in August 1990.

OPEC freezes quotas until year-end

GENEVA (R) — The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) decided in Geneva on Saturday to freeze production quotas until the end of 1994 in a bid to revive depressed world oil prices. Some of the 12 members of the organisation had wanted to cut output but found Saudi Arabia, the biggest exporter, reluctant to cede market share. Iran, the Saudis' traditional Gulf rival and an oil price "hawk," called the decision "unfortunate." The agreement extending an output freeze beyond what markets had originally expected seems designed to achieve a gradual recovery of world oil prices.

Yemen parliament urges end to crisis

SANAA (R) — Yemen's parliamentary speaker on Saturday urged the country's rival leaders to settle their dispute. Sheikh Abdullah Ben Hussein Al Ahmar told parliament the leaders had failed to implement a reconciliation accord signed in Jordan last month to end the crisis which has paralysed the government since July and pushed Yemen towards partition. "We and all our people... had thought that the signing of the accord would end all the signs of the crisis, but more than a month later nothing has been implemented," Sheikh Ahmar said.

German town protests synagogue attack

LUEBECK, Germany (R) — More than 4,000 people protested on Saturday in the northern port city of Luebeck against the first fire-bombing of a synagogue in Germany since the dark days of the third Reich. The city observed a five-minute silence just before noon to reflect on the Molotov cocktail attack by suspected neo-Nazis in the early hours of Friday that left Luebeck's synagogue charred and its tiny 27-strong Jewish community deep in shock. Candles were lit, bridges were closed off and many people stopped whatever they were doing in a gesture entitled "A city holds its breath."